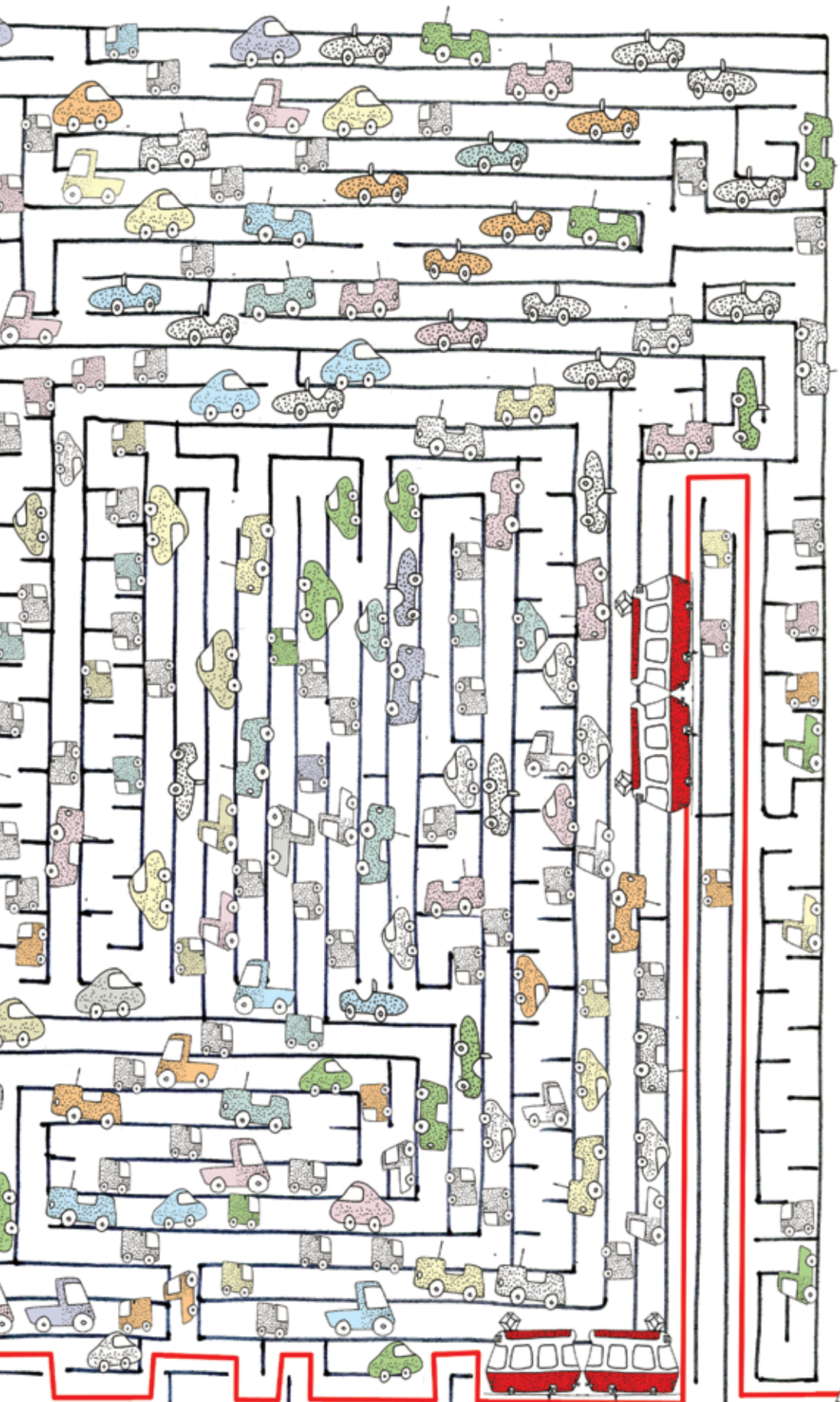
CARBUSTERS

JOURNAL OF THE CARFREE MOVEMENT #40 / DEC 2009 - FEB 2010



PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SPECIAL

WORLD CARFREE DAY 2009

COP15: TRANSPORT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Carbusters on the Move

Faced with the current overwhelming effects and grim future predictions on climate change, people are shifting their patterns of consumption, energy use and transportation modes, though admittedly not fast enough. The United Nations climate change conference in Copenhagen (COP 15) in December 2009 hopes to be a turning point in the fight to prevent climate disaster; gathering world leaders to discuss all the essential elements of an effective deal on climate change.

Transportation plays a part in contributing to the climate problem. Daniel Bongardt shares the scary figures with us – it accounts for one quarter of energy related carbon dioxide emissions, a figure which is expected to rise – and urges the sustainable alternatives (bicycling, walking and public transport) to be considered in the negotiations, both in long-term commitments and pushed as immediate solutions (page 20).

This year *Carbusters* is going to Copenhagen – we hope, along with other non-profit organisations, to help convince world leaders to place the alternatives high on their agendas. Public transport is essential to be included in these negotiations; being a means to move around without causing extensive damage to the environment. This issue we focus the headlights on public transportation. A series of articles explore different aspects from free public transport (page 22), to the rise of public transport and passenger rights (page 18).

The time for action is now. In the run up to Copenhagen, and beyond, we must use all our channels, networks, media and contacts, and be proactive in communicating our commitment and successes in the carfree movement. A clear and widespread carfree message is what we need. Eric Britton agrees, and tells us more about World Carfree Day; how and why strengthening the message of these actions can help accelerate urban transport sustainability (page 10).

To change our direction and live lightly on the earth requires a shift in consciousness, as well as relinquishing some of the conveniences which have so aggressively provided wealth for few and contribute to the cause of our environmental damage. Debra Efroymson considers how liberating carfree can be, particularly in the economic sense – jobs and wealth distribution are only among the many of its effects (page 14). Fazilka is a city which has taken a change in direction as a result of a shift in its leaders and citizens' ways to travel. Arnab Pratim Dutta dials a rickshaw and takes us on a tour through the bumpy journey of the first carfree city in the region of India (page 12).

"A clear and widespread carfree message is what we need"

The speed of transition required to meet the challenges of what climate changes brings, pushes us to explore many new sustainable ways of living and moving. For many this involves using some form of motorised technology. In this transition, we will not abandon technology, nor should we, but we can change our relationship to it and use it in more responsible ways. The bicycle is a form of technology that is appropriate, accessible for people all over the world, and deserves investment. Bikes – and pedal power – are great tools for the future. Following a chat with Brendt Barbur, founder of the international Bike Film Festival, it becomes clear the importance is not only to push for it in policy, but also to promote it – making it accessible, arty and above all fun (page 26).

From this month, *Carbusters* enters a new era. Not only does it travel to the Danish capital to support the ideas of the carfree movement reaching world leaders. It relaunches as a completely updated and enhanced website to complement this printed version. This move online allows us to respond more quickly to a rapidly changing world, while still continuing to provide relevant and thought provoking analysis as we continue making tracks towards a world without cars.

As *Carbusters* makes moves, so do I – taking my leave as a member of the editorial collective. The loyalty and participation of all our readers is, as always, greatly appreciated. Your support is needed now more than ever in this challenging era, and we encourage you to support the World Carfree Network by making a financial donation (page 30). We hope that you will continue to subscribe to the *Carbusters* hard copy, donate to our cause, and make good use of the new website, which includes our entire archive of back issues, all the news, interviews, analysis, and the same regular features. We look forward to seeing you there.

Jane Harding

CARBUSTERS

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Education and Culture DG
'Youth in Action' Programme

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letters

Fighting for the Carfree Cause

Dear *Carbusters*,
I am a passionate car-hater, although I would tolerate them somewhat if they were electric, charged up by wind, solar etc. Burning oil seems just insane – all it causes is climate chaos and war.

Just for your interest, here is a letter I send out to politicians, academics, journalists etc. I get a fair few replies, many of them on the lines of "I cycle a lot, and only use the car for the family" or "It's up to governments to take responsibility".

Dear Professor XYZ,
I write to you, as I have written to Professor Chomsky, Lord May, Professor Holdren and others, to urge you to give up your car.

It seems to me that the academic and intellectual community must take a lead on the issue of fossil fuel conservation. Don't just give up your car – boast about it, shout it from the rooftops. If you feel you must have a car, consider electric cars, which can be charged up by wind, solar etc. If nothing else, at least get a car that uses as little fuel as possible.

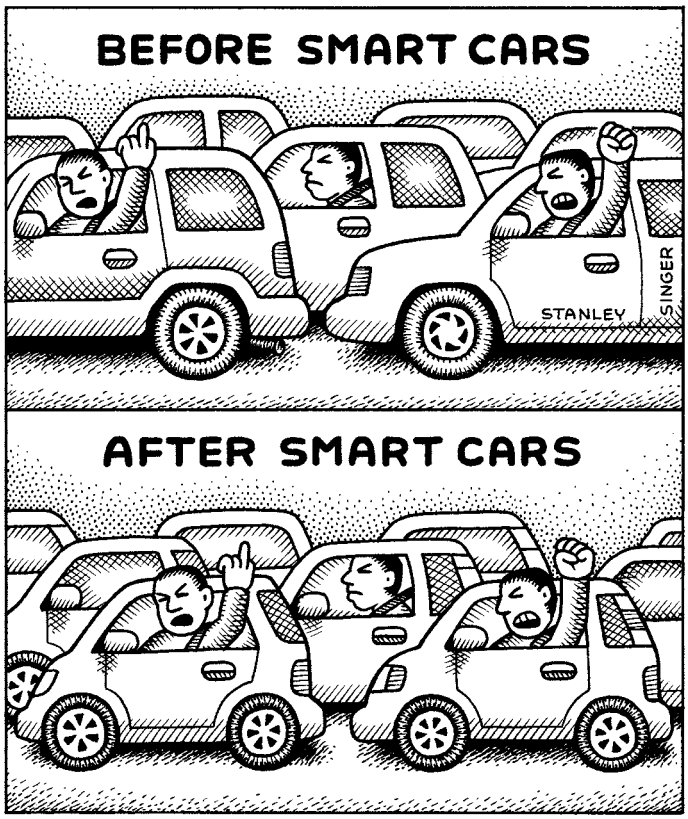
Of course, you should also hasten to insulate your house as effectively as possible, and here, again, I suggest you encourage your friends, family and colleagues to do likewise.

I gave up my car about eight years ago, and it's remarkable how little I miss it. Not having one makes me feel cleaner.
Jeremy Stein, London, UK

AUTO-MOTIVE

It takes an incredible amount of metal for an automobile to be assembled/
to the point where steel resembles precious emeralds/
ruby red paint on all the rentals/
I'm sentimental/ cause I remember with my mental/
a time before the detrimental sentinels of cars developed dentals/
and started eating all the petrol/chewing unleaded pencils/
concrete on the streets trace the planet like a stencil/
now the trees aren't as plentiful/
and traffic keeps us trapped in panic/
scanning radio static for accidents/
itching like addicts in a rehab annex/
we got track marks, rushing to work on roads like race tracks/
we say 'we hate that' but that fact is that we create back ups/
with tractor trailers and Mac trucks/
among Acura's and fuel tankers/
soon to be a war on our soil for the middle eastern oil/
leaves the population left to boil/ were in turmoil/
4th branch of the government is snaked up in a coil/
but we got to strike before the loyalist extremists might/
and bite them while their frightened of our uprising/
Zach Grossman, Conshohocken, PA, US

NO EXIT **© Andy Singer**



In Bangladesh we are using the slogan "Change Climate Not Behaviour" to try to encourage people to think about the steps they can make to show governments that action to reduce climate change would be popular... Beyond talking about the goal of 350, show that we are willing to work to achieve it. **Syed Saiful Alam, Bangladesh**

Carbusters Online!
carbusters.org

Carbusters **website has had a makeover! We're proud to announce the new and improved website which offers you all the action from the magazine of the carfree movement! Now you can easily browse through all back issues, test out its new interactive features, read the blog and make a donation. Big thanks to everyone who has supported us so far helping to keep** ***Carbusters*** **crusing.**

Towards Carfree Cities IX Conference
York, UK: June 28-July 1, 2010

Next year's theme is "How Do We Get There?" focusing on bringing carfree communities to life. TCC IX conference includes lectures, panel discussions, workshops, study tours and a real street conversion exercise! Registration for the carfree event of the year is now open: an early booking discount applies until 31 January 2010. www.worldcarfree.net

World Carfree Network brings together organisations and individuals dedicated to promoting alternatives to car dependence. Member Group Profile outlines the history, latest projects and carfree activities of one member.

■ by Steven E. Miller

LivableStreets Alliance

Rethinking Urban Transportation in Boston

It wasn't long ago that Boston was labelled the worst city for bicycling in the United States. This was during a time that Boston's advocacy groups fought separately, with limited success, to improve conditions for their individual modes: walking, cycling, handicap access, transit, trains, and cars. Boston-area advocates for transportation, public health, city planning, smart growth, environmental protection, watershed conservation, and park and green space preservation hardly talked to each other.

LivableStreets Alliance was started in 2005 to bring these different groups and people together around a common strategic vision – a belief that improving our transportation system provides enormous leverage for making Boston a healthier, friendlier, more sustainable, and affordable place to live, work, play, shop, go to school, raise families, and grow old. Key to that vision was transforming the fragmented pieces of our transportation networks into a coordinated whole that balances transit, walking, biking, and handicap access with automobiles.

The organisation practices an "inside and outside" approach to advocacy: working closely with government and private sector professionals who support positive policies and projects, educating and mobilising the public to pressure those who do not. We try to work within the tension of wanting radical changes and achieving realistic victories. It is important to know if a possible compromise design for new infrastructure allows for future incremental improvement or if it locks in unsafe conditions for the next 50 years.

LivableStreets Alliance has helped change the nature of Boston transportation advocacy – and many aspects of official transportation planning. Working with the City of Boston and has helped reform parking policies, road designs, and bike parking in nearby urban municipalities. We also have seats on state-level advisory committees. By combining advocate mobilisation with calls to state agencies, has helped to convince Boston transportation officials to improve plans for a major street – even though plans were already approaching completion. The original designs contained no bicycle accommodations, had narrow sidewalks, poor pedestrian signals, did not prioritise public transit and included an additional car lane. As a result, significant improvements were implemented – although there is continued monitoring of future developments.

When a deadly bridge collapsed in Minnesota, it pushed Massachusetts to finally focus on its own dilapidated infrastructure. The state originally planned to simply rebuild its bridges as they were, despite their notoriously lack of safety for pedestrians, bikes, buses, and even cars! In response, we suggested well designed options, and safety improvements highlighted which could change a hostile public into a cheering squad. After months of public and private discussions, the state came around and adopted a more multi-modal approach.

Reaching out the People

The Boston advocacy group pays attention to media and public education as much as advocacy. Our weekly summary of transportation headlines and our monthly StreetLife newsletter reach thousands of policy-makers, advocates and citizens. Our monthly StreetTalk presentations introduce innovators from around the world to a growing local audience, while our special events creates awareness that ripples through the community.

Because our organising principles include quality of life, health, vibrant neighbourhoods, and economic vitality, we face the challenge of dealing not only with transportation issues, but with urban existence as a whole – housing, economic growth, employment, recreation, health, and more. We need to be holistic while remaining focused on making gains in particular battles.

We are hopeful. National and state level transportation planning is changing, at least rhetorically. The externalised costs of our car-centric transportation system have finally become too obvious to be ignored. After the collapse of the deregulated financial industry and now that the auto industry has (at least temporarily) lost its normal political clout, the opportunity has arisen for ideas promoted by progressive advocates to have a larger-than-normal impact on local, state, and even national transportation policies.

It is unlikely that we will be able to win our most radical demands, but by uniting around a core set of structural changes and finding ways to take advantage of the current economic and political turmoil, there is a good chance of making some key advances. It is this vision, of a broad multi-issue coalition united around a vision of "active, sustainable, transportation" that motivates us and shapes our strategies. ■

All Engines Go

We do not all share the same dreams, and Chris Lentz's dream definitely differs from that of *Carbusters*. This native of Michigan, US wanted to give more power to his 2005 Ford F-150, and found a way to accomplish it: he bought an old Czechoslovakian Motorlet M-701 turbojet on eBay for US$12,000 and attached it to his truck. To install the jet in the truck, Lentz fabricated a sturdy mounting stand, a 76-litre kerosene tank, and a control console from aluminium and stainless steel. He is now the happy owner of a jet-powered truck. This brilliant machine allows him to reach a speed of 100km/h in 6 seconds and 225 km/h in 45 seconds. Don't ask us the point of all this, but according to Jalopnik – a website "obsessed with the cult of cars" – it is definitely the "coolest truck ever". **www.jalopnik.com**

Drink or Drive

The number of cup holders used to be one of the most important aspects for Americans when buying a new car. This particularity is probably connected to the fast-food culture and the culture of consuming as much as possible. According to a consumer survey by Pricewaterhouse Coopers, the consumption of fuel has become a more determinant element in the choice of a new car. What wonderful news, people have more consideration for climate issues and peak oil, than for drinking soda while driving. In fact not, they mostly have more consideration for their expenditures in a context of economical troubles. The price of oil is climbing again and we can realistically think that it will keep on rising. *Carbusters* is waiting for the moment when our societies will finally decide to have more consideration for the environment than economical considerations.
www.treehugger.com

At Opposite Ends

Paris and its suburbs are well known for its saturated roads and its non-stop traffic jams. And everybody agrees that there should be fewer cars, but of course nobody wants to stop using their own car. Following the same logic, two Parisian mayors created a small chaos in their localities.

When the conservative mayor of Levallois-Perret, initially made the D909 one-way to reduce the amount of commuter traffic through his district, the Socialist mayor of neighbouring Clichy-la-Garenne made his section of the road one-way in the opposite direction. Both of them were arguing that the road was increasing congestion in their own area. This is right, as more than thousands of motorists pass between the two suburbs each day on their way into and out of the French capital.

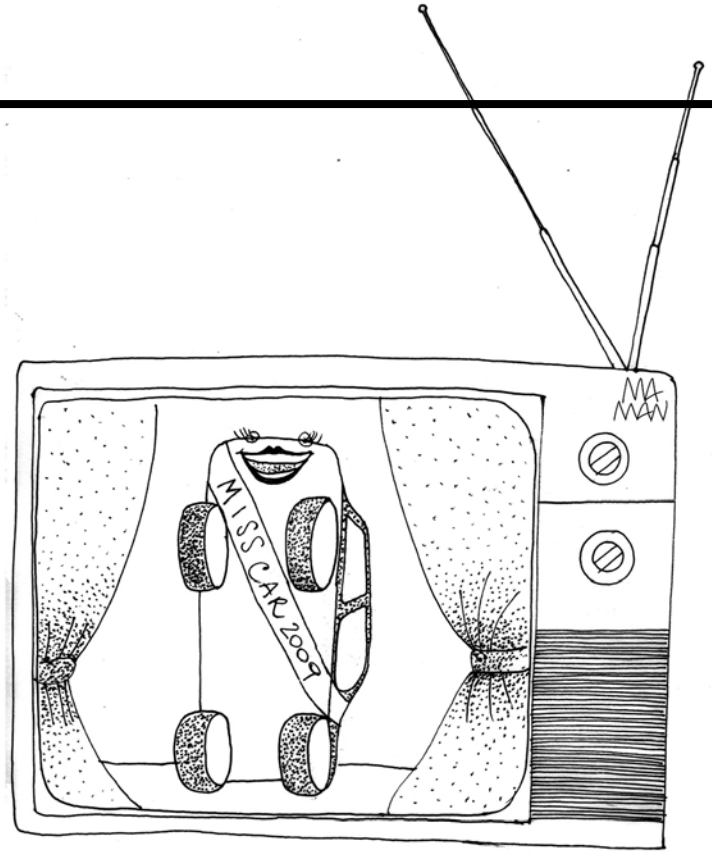
With the contradictory road-signs in place, the unsurprising result was gridlock, prompting the deployment of municipal and national police to direct traffic away from the area. The opening of a new shopping mall stimulated the decision of the mayor of Levallois-Perret. The one-way road of Clichy-la-Garenne was declared illegal, but the legal fight keeps on going for the pleasure of car drivers. **www.leparisien.fr**

Hate People Love Cars

Here is the statement about a very fancy T-shirt for all car lovers. "Since the first collection, this shirt has attained cult status. You like your car better than your friends? Then this basic black tee with crew neck exactly right for you!" explains one German website selling the T-shirt. Another is speaking about "the unequivocal statement to be worn by all muscles drivers". Convinced that many of you will feel tempted by buying it, the T-shirt is available in black in all sizes for the small price of 30 Euros. Make car, not love.
www.loco-style-shop.com

Dangerous Cyclists

A collective of motorists from Colorado, US, in summer 2008 launched a call for civil disobedience against the extension of bicyclist's rights and the state's new law – about a minimum distance to keep between cars and cyclists while passing them. They distributed an amazing flyer explaining that "cyclist flout common sense, endanger those in cars on mountain roads in the name of selfishness; cars will be forced to cross double yellow lines on dangerous limited visibility roads due to the expanded rights of cyclists. "The text is asking for civil disobedience, in order to fight these dead machines that threaten peaceful drivers – bicycles. It calls all people "who have been endangered by cyclist behaviour" to protest against this new law.
www.urbanvelo.org



Steel Stars on TV

If you missed your dream to be an actor, your car can nowadays fulfil it. Indeed, a growing number of vehicle owners are leasing their cars to television and film producers. "It was very exciting" said Brett Kenyon, owner of a Jaguar XJC Coupe to an Australian online newspaper. He gathered his wife and a group of friends and they all sat around the box waiting for her to appear on screen. When she finally did, there were cries of joy and recognition. "We were all waiting and when the car was first seen there was a little bit of a cheer " said Kenyon.

According to Shan Railton from Vantage Management, (an American agency specialising in "star cars" for TV, film, promotions and events), "Economic times may be down but more people are staying home and watching the telly so we're seeing as much work as ever." Many car lovers bring their wheels to Railton's agency but he also scouts car clubs, websites, car parks, events and particular suburbs for unusual and unique cars to add to his catalogue.

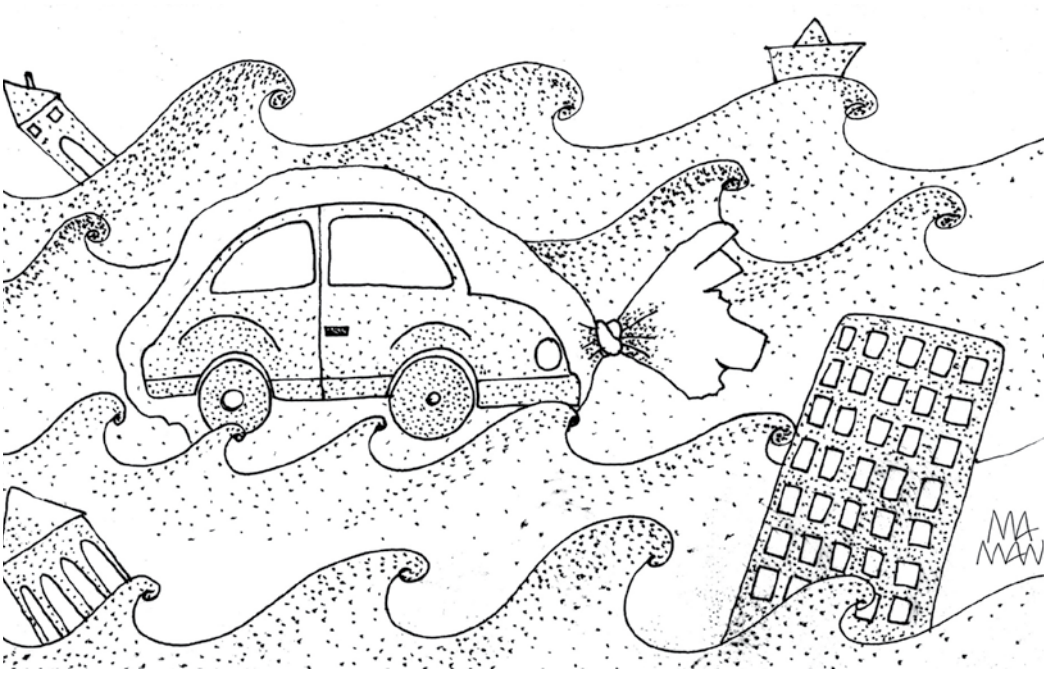
The pay varies depending on how long the vehicle is needed for, how heavily it will feature and the budget of the production. For a two-hour magazine fashion shoot or a static shot in a television or film production it might be US$200 to US$300; for a commercial filmed over a few days, the owner could receive US$2000.
www.watoday.com.au

CO2 is Green

"CO2 is not a pollutant. CO2 makes Earth green because it supports all plant life. It is Earth's greatest airborne fertilizer. Even man-made CO2 contributes to plant growth that in turn sustains humanity and ecosystems. The website CO2 Is Green works to insure that all federal laws or regulations are founded upon science and not politics or scientific myths. No one wants the plant and animal kingdoms, including humanity, to be harmed if atmospheric CO2 is reduced. The current dialogue in Washington, US, needs to reflect these inalterable facts of nature. We cannot afford to make mistakes that would actually harm both the plant and animal kingdoms."

Didn't you know that? Then you should absolutely go and visit the CO2 Is Green website. Authors of the website describe themselves as philanthropists facing the difficult task to provide the truth to people "misinformed by people that benefit financially from propagating the myth" (e.g. the myth of climate change). Nowhere on the website can you find the great environmentalists behind

this beautiful initiative. Maybe they are too shy, but after some research, you can discover that these new friends of the earth are H. Leighton Steward, a veteran oil industry executive and Corbin J. Robertson Jr., chief executive of and leading shareholder in Natural Resource Partners, a Houston-based owner of coal resources. In a way, it is right that we shouldn't focus all our attention on CO2, and better look at all aspects of the environmental crisis.
www.co2isgreen.org



Car in a Plastic Bag

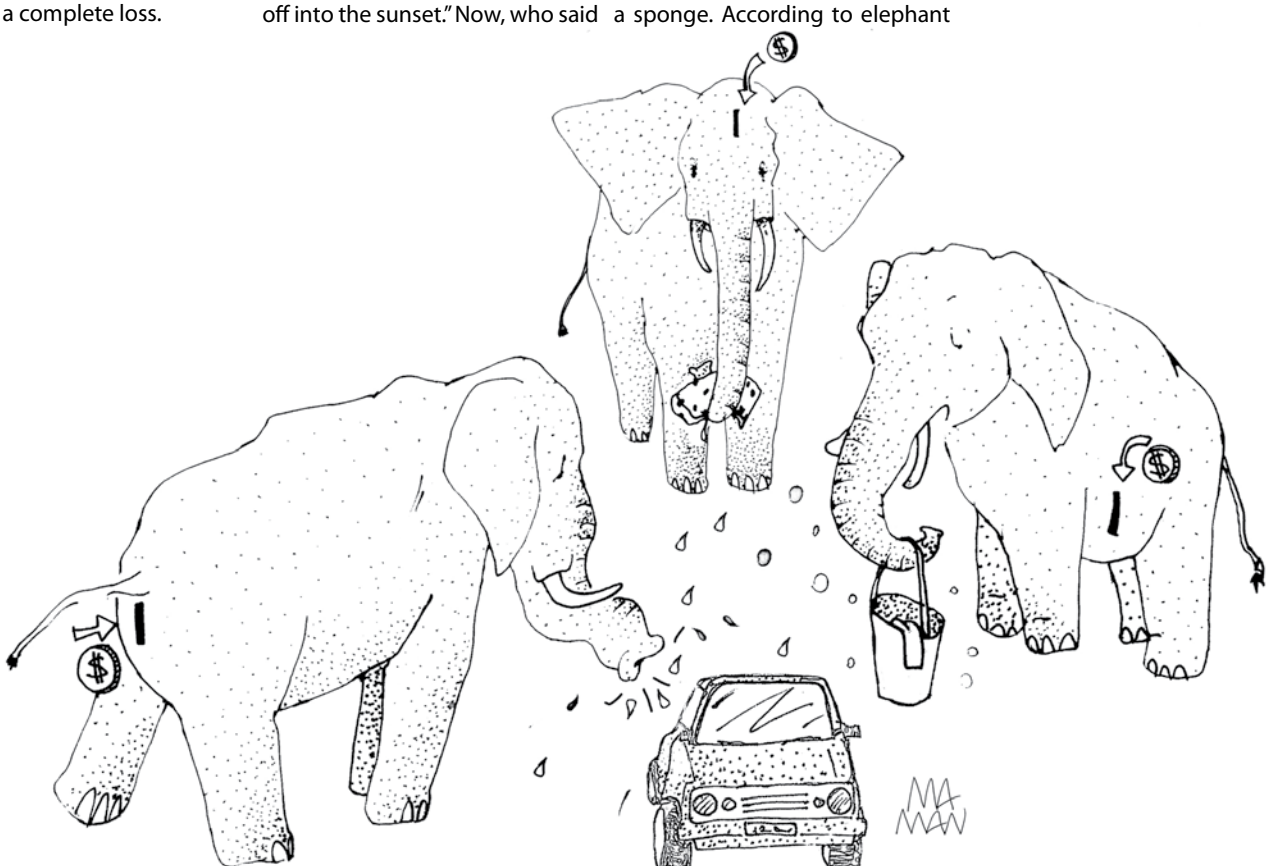
Facing the threat of floods and other climate disasters, solutions are urgently needed. We don't all share the same approach to the problem and therefore don't find the same solutions.

Have you ever hear about the "Flood Bag"? Nobody could present it better than its creators: "We've all seen the television footage of cars up to their headlights in muddy flood waters. Vehicles are often abandoned because waters rise quickly and become too deep to drive safely. What we don't see is the ravage a flood causes to a car once the waters recede. The engine and interior are full of gritty, gooey mud that clings to everything. Usually the motor is ruined and the vehicle is declared a complete loss.

This giant plastic bag is the ultimate in vehicle flood protection and it's so simple to use. The interior of the bag has markings to guide you as you drive your car into it. Exit the vehicle and pull the sides of the bag up over your car. Next, pull the draw-string tightly, closing the orifice. The key here is to make sure you leave an opening large enough to allow air to escape as the flood waters ensue. Otherwise trapped air will fill the bag and your car will float off into the sunset." Now, who said we should do something to tackle climate change?
www.totallyabsurd.com

Green-Washing

The Wildlife Animal Park in southern Oregon, US, has come up with an unusual way to raise money. They taught their three elephants called Alice, Tiki and George, how to wash cars. For US$20 the African elephants will blast your car with water from their trunks and then scrub the vehicle clean with a sponge. According to elephant trainer Katie Alayan, "It's so much fun for [the elephants], they love playing in water anyway, and they love interacting with people." The elephant car wash is sold as a form of entertainment for visitors. Some words from the executive director of the Wildlife Animal Park, "It's guaranteed to not get your car clean!" As with all other green washing, this doesn't guarantee to make human activities cleaner. **www.bbc.co.uk**



"World Carfree Day is the perfect time to take the heat off the planet, and put it on city planners and politicians to give priority to cycling, walking and public transport, instead of to the automobile." World Carfree Network

Irpin, Ukraine

Munich, Germany

Irpin

This year World Carfree Day (WCD) was a success in the Ukraine. More people on city streets found out about the carfree movement for the first time. The city of Irpin had its main street closed to cars and the main square was alive with music and informative speeches. Local officials were active in preparations. The event received nearly 20 different forms of media coverage. Citizens of Irpin came to enjoy the entertainment, as well as join a cycling parade around the town, showing their delight in a town centre free of cars, by waving their hands and applauding. The parade finished in a forest where a cross-country competition was to begin. Several other Ukrainian towns held WCD events including Kyiv, Lviv and Sumy.

Yuliya Mucluk
www.climateinfo.org.ua

Vienna

For the third year in a row, IG Fahrrad organised a public event on one of the busiest roads in Vienna's town centre. The "Ringstrasse" or "Ring" road encircles the Old Town with four lanes for cars and two tram-lines, while pedestrians and cyclists have to share a small alleyway. On WCD IG Fahrrad, along with a platform of other environmental organisations made a demonstration of how pleasant this road could be without cars. Several hundred people enjoyed a picnic on the ring road, while thousands of passersby got the point. The city government, car drivers and car lobbies were not amused to see this happen during weekday rush hour traffic, but it attracted media attention. The event was a big success!

Alec Hager
lobby.ig-fahrrad.org

Munich

Munich's first WCD in 2000 was organised by Green City who presented the Streetlife Festival, a big carfree street party on one of city's main boulevards. The second Streetlife Festival took place in September this year and again received a huge attendance, with more than 150,000 visitors. People enjoyed live music, food and, most importantly, were informed about sustainable transportation and innovative use of urban spaces. In addition, Green City participated in a PARK(ing) DAY, where 16 separate parking areas in downtown Munich were transformed into public green spaces where passersby could relax, have a drink or a snack and chat. The message was clear: Less cars make room for more green in Munich!

Johannes Link
www.greencity.de

Mumbai

Over 100 citizens participated in a "cycle rally" organised by the Young Environmentalists on the first ever WCD in Mumbai, India. Over 300 other people came to join in the action with the flyers: *Come Fight Climate Change*. It was a roaring success. According to Elsie Gabriel, the founder of Young Environmentalists: "We are doing this as a symbolic gesture and do not expect cars to disappear from roads in our first year but hope this will be a beginning of options like car pool, public transport and non-motorised transport here in Mumbai." Hopefully the authorities will make more footpaths and cycle lane provisions in the near future, thus respecting the pedestrians and people who want to cycle in the future!

Elsie Gabriel
youngenvironmentalists.com

Vienna, Austria

Mumbai, India

San Sebastián, Spain

Hanoi, Vietnam

San Sebastián

In recognition of WCD 2009, Kalapie, the Urban Cyclists Association of San Sebastián, as in previous years, offered snacks, bicycle bells, red lights and reflective bracelets on the bikeway during this warm September day to all urban cyclists. The objective was to promote cycling as a means of daily transport and reduce car use. There was food and drink on offer to the cyclists, and there were information stalls about cycling in the city. San Sebastián is a city in Spain which has the lowest percentage of cyclists, not amounting to more than 3%. One of the biggest problems the city faces in increasing its number of bike users is the struggle to secure safe connections for cyclists to enter and exit the city.

www.kalapie.org

Curitiba

Curitiba had a fast paced, but carfree September. The Brazilian city started out on the right foot, with a Commuter's Challenge. This year's edition of the multimodal race included a helicopter and a car, but the bicycle once again came out the fastest, cheapest and cleanest. The Federal University hosted a week-long seminar for participants ranging from architects to anthropologists, discussing the city's mobility issues. On weekends, Grupo Transporte Humano supported free bike workshops in public parks and private garages. Entertainment on WCD included live music at different crossroads, a fashion parade by Curitiba Cycle Chic and, of course, a successful Critical Mass ride.

Luis Patricio
transportehumano.com.br

Hanoi

As Vietnam's economy booms, motorised transport continues to grow, as does the poor air quality in cities. Facing this choking evolution, the Green Transport campaign was born to promote daily use of sustainable transportation in Hanoi. It started with a Green Transport Day in May 2008 which had nearly 3,600 participants. Building on this success, Green Transport Week was created. This year's theme "Get to work differently" encouraged employees to cycle, walk or take the bus to work. Some friendly competition among workplaces pushed offices to cut their CO2 emissions. The campaign will continue until green transport becomes a sustainable pattern in the city.

Tran Thi Hai
www.vidothi.org

Prague

World Carfree Network in Prague celebrated WCD twice this year. First during Prague Bike Ride on September 20, organised by our network's member organisation Auto*Mat. The bike ride was complemented by a street festival and was the biggest in Czech history (5,000 participants) with the longest route ever (13,5km). WCN and *Carbusters* were presented by an information stall with two people wearing hungry cars' outfits. The second celebration took place on September 22. More than 200 people came to join the celebratory party which took place in an underground club; it included four live bands, an eco-action fashion show, a juggling fire show, and presentations from local NGOs.

Lenka Kukurova
www.worldcarfree.net

Curitiba, Brazil

Prague, Czech Republic

World Car Free Day

Interview with Eric Britton ■ by Jane Harding

September 22 is an important date to remember – it's World Carfree Day (WCD). Celebrated in towns and cities all over the world, it's a day when streets are closed to cars and open for pedestrians, pedalers, parties and pleasure. Eric Britton, a sustainability activist, international adviser and consultant on sustainable transportation, is recognised for his work promoting and propelling WCD to international attention. Much of his work involves co-ordinating the collaborative New Mobility Agenda and World Streets online journal, which encompass a number of possible transport solutions, including public transport, bike sharing and shared space projects. In an interview with* Carbusters*, Eric shared his thoughts about the problems, popularity and prospects for WCD, and points out the importance of bringing it into the policy agenda of governments in order to improve urban transport sustainability.

New and existing WCD events continue to spread and strengthen in cities and towns across the world. What do you think about the popularity of WCD?

There are many ways to look at the popularity of WCD. If you look at any city where WCDs are held, you will find that the public reaction can fall into three different groups: first, the largest group, are people who simply don't know a WCD exists or takes place in that city; a second group knows that a WCD is going on, but either dislikes it or chooses not to support it (although their criticism can be very useful); and the third group are the organisers or participants of the WCD. And of course, they like it a lot.

The fact that we have thousands of cities celebrating WCD is something of value and a huge accomplishment. However, we must be realistic - thus far it has had very little impact and it is not considered high priority in the transportation policies of many cities. Currently WCD is just a device to insight public discussion. WCD needs to be worked into the mainstream transportation policies of many cities in order to bring further change and my work will focus on this over the next few years.

Convincing policy makers and authorities to support WCD is a common problem. Why do you think these problems persist and how can they be overcome?

One problem is that there is either none or very little difference between the ways in which WCDs are organised and carried out. Another problem is the current lack of a consistent or specific message with which to bring forward to public policy makers. However, WCD does carry a very important general message: there are too many cars in cities which we need to control and many parts of our cities would do better with fewer cars, but that message by itself is not enough.

WCD has the potential to be a useful tool in influencing a city's overall policy, particularly regarding transportation. Through my work I try to keep track of WCDs around the world and find how we can make better use of this tool. Having worked and talked with mayors and public policymakers all over the world, it is clear they are very busy and transportation forms just one part of their responsibility. With the current lack of a consistent message and credible proposal, it will always be a struggle to push WCDs further to what we think they should be doing. Therefore, WCD needs to be shown in very concrete terms in order to be taken into the policy agenda. This could be a small number of well defined recommendations given to public policymakers – ideally, this message should include three points of what people think should and can be done.

Where have you seen WCD work best?

It's really best to ask the organisers. People involved in the organisation have the best knowledge of what works and what doesn't. They often work closely with authorities to make one day where many streets are taken over, so it becomes safe for families, cyclists and pedestrians.

A famous example is Bogotá, Colombia, which holds the world's largest carfree weekday event covering the entire city. The first WCD was held in 2000, and it has since become an institutionalised event, following the 2006 Towards Carfree Cities conference and former Mayor Enrique Peñalosa's influence which helped a pattern of carfree activities spread in Bogotá, as well as to other cities in Latin America.

There are many small local events, which are sometimes hard to follow; they fall into three main categories: the first ones have good ideas; second ones are ok; and the third are the clear losers. However, there is another group, probably the most important, which act as instruments of change on public policy and people's practices in the city. Currently WCD is too abstract, so we need to focus it. The impor-

tant point is how well these events are done, not how many carfree days are held in a city. But despite not having a very strong concept, it has still spread widely, and by strengthening it, it has the potential to grow much more.

In a world still so gripped with cars, do you see carfree day evolving into a permanent reality?

The ideal outcome of WCDs is that at one point they will disappear, because they are no longer needed. We would have accomplished the objective of softening the impact that cars have on a city. WCD has grown, simply because it is an idea that many people like, not just because of the number of organisations, groups, individuals, or authorities supporting it. Now is the time to come up with more and better ideas that people like and that are powerful enough to become a permanent reality.

There are two carfree "gadgets" which I believe are really useful in helping us achieve this: "Carfree Sundays" and a "New Mobility Week". These are regular events where networks of city streets are closed to traffic for one day a week, or for one week of the year. With these ideas, I intend to create something similar to the European Mobility Week and to link it to the annual WCD. But a New Mobility Week would have more of a consistent structure and contain "doable" actions for specific cities. I don't think carfree events should have a uniform approach – each with a different concept and mission – the only part which would be the same in every place could be Carfree Sundays. Eventually these activities would take place every day of the week, making carfree cities a permanent reality.

What is your advice for groups or individuals starting a new carfree day?

My first recommendation is to take time to study what works and what hasn't worked – to become aware of this sector and not just dive straight in with no background. Anybody in any city can do a WCD, but doing it well involves some research.

I would encourage anyone interested in organising an event to create an attractive website, where everyone can pitch in with their ideas – making it fun and interactive. Using media is a great way of reaching out to people. There is a lot of information on sustainable transportation out there which is too dense for most people to feel inspired. It is important to make it simple, selecting what is interesting and accessible to most people, as well as making it available in other languages.

It is important to talk to people who don't support the WCD approach (e.g. local merchants and car user groups) and with police who are on the street all the time so know more about transportation than most in the city. Listening to what they have to say will help us understand what can be done to make it more of a success. Make sure you test your ideas, not simply just to think it is a great idea and do it.

What projects are you currently working on and have lined up for the future?

What I would love to do, in a few years, is to put an end to all my mobility-type activities and pass it onto other capable people to carry on this work. I'd like to spend more time on projects outside of mobility: pursuing my interests on how society works and its problems, ranging from economic issues to ethnic tensions.

"WCD has the potential to be a very important tool in influencing a city's overall policy, particularly transportation"

For now, I still have a lot of work to do in new mobility. Over the next few years, I shall continue to maintain and strengthen the New Mobility Agenda and all of its subsets, of which WCD is one, as well as the World Streets blog, and to work with colleagues around the world to create local editions in local languages in order to make it accessible to more people.

Another project I've already began working on is a series of what I call "New Mobility Master Classes". This involves bringing together people in different countries with broad experience and who can eventually lead their own projects, in order to create a template model for sustainable mobility. The Master Class might be a week long or last a whole month and we try to involve students and academics working in this field. The overall idea is to take new mobility apart in the context of a single city, over the course of one month, talking about many different topics related to mobility, with one of the days devoted to WCD. Once the model has begun to work well, then other people in the field will be able to run their own Master Classes. So I'll be busy!

How do you think sustainable mobility and broader issues like climate change can be connected?

We've got a planet that is really suffering from our behaviour. People often talk about car sharing, bicycle sharing and street sharing, but it is important to share information online and to bring people together to discuss these topics. The first gathering of this kind is the World Sharing Transport Conference taking place in Taiwan in September 2010. It will look deeper into the topic of sharing which has not been talked about much before, as well as studying other aspects such as the behavioural psychology behind it. The important message to spread is that sharing is a great way to meet new people, it's cool, and it helps save the planet. ■

For more information on World Carfree Day and sustainable mobility:

New Mobility Agenda **www.newmobility.org**
World Streets **www.worldstreet.org**
World Sharing Transport Conference **www.kaohsiung.sharetransport.org**
World Carfree Day **www.worldcarfree.net**

■ by Arnab Pratim Dutta

Fazilka
come without your car

Fazilka is a small, 162 year old town on the India-Pakistan border. Its unkempt, garbage-strewn congested streets with small, bustling shops are nothing out of the ordinary. But this town of about 68,000 people – and about 45,000 vehicles on its narrow lanes – has removed one source of congestion: cars.

On November 21, 2008, the city made history, when it became the first in the region to implement the "Carfree City" concept. The main market area around the Ghanta Ghar (Clock Tower) was declared a "Car Free Zone" – the entry of cars was banned between 10am, when most shops open, and 7pm, when the shopkeepers head home – despite initial opposition, especially from shopkeepers who feared losing clientele. Only two wheelers (bikes and motorbikes) are allowed, but the town plans to remove them gradually.

Fazilka continues to build on its carfree success, by placing special emphasis on traffic calming devices and installing permanent barriers in a few locations, in addition to the introduction of other alternative ways of getting from A to B (such as "Ecocabs" or dial-a-rickshaw service), all helping to make the city centre more sustainable, pedestrian and cycle friendly.

Fazilka Finding its Feet

Fazilka's unusual story began with a festival in 2006. In the last week of March that year, a citizens' group of about 250 people, called the Graduates Welfare Association Fazilka (GWAF) organised the Fazilka Heritage Festival. A stretch of 300 metres on the Sadhu Ashram Road, not far from the current carfree zone, was converted into a pedestrian street. GWAF used this event as a case study to conduct an experiment to keep the same city central zone as a carfree zone. By remaining free of cars, the study revealed not just an improvement in the quality of social life, but also in the law and order, environment through less air pollution from car emissions, economy and road safety of the residents.

"The festival was a success," said Bhupender Singh, a retired professor of mechanical engineering and an architect of this project. "Without cars, there was a lot of road space for everybody. There were stalls selling everything from food to handicrafts and people danced on the streets without the fear of being run over," he added.

The festival was held again next year, though at a different location: the Salem Shah East West Corridor, which crosses the Ghanta Ghar. This time, the carfree zone extended about a kilometre. Again, the festival was well received by residents and set the tone for a dedicated carfree zone.

"It is only logical that first the most congested area of the town should be freed from traffic," said Navdeep Asija, project manager of the Punjab Roads and Bridges Development Board. Asija had been studying the town's traffic problems since 2006. "Fazilka is approximately 10.29 sq km big with each side spanning just a little over three kilometres. It can easily become a pedestrian city, with motorised vehicles used primarily for transportation of goods."

Market Matters

Festivals can change cities. However, these festivals alone did not ensure a permanent carfree zone. GWAF was trying to convince the municipality to designate a carfree zone. This did not come up without initial resistance. Initially, shopkeepers were not too keen on the idea as they thought it would drive away customers, said Asija, adding that the municipality feared protests.

The stalemate continued until September 2008, when Anil Sethi took over as the president of the municipal committee. A trader himself, Sethi heard GWAF's idea of a carfree

zone, became interested, and set about implementing it. He considered such a scheme beneficial to Ghanta Ghar shopkeepers because it would decongest the area. Sethi's influence among the traders helped him convince them, through several meetings with traders and their associations in order to create consensus.

The Ghanta Ghar market has three roads jutting out of it in three different directions.

"It is only logical that first the most congested area of the town should be freed from traffic"

The lane encircling the Ghanta Ghar is about 200 metres long and is now free of traffic, as the three roads were barricaded. A further 800 metres of the road connecting the Hotel Bazar in the north to Wool Bazar in the south has been blocked. Another 400 metres of road in the east has been barricaded, and a stretch of road in the west has been blocked by a temple.

Once apprehensive, the shopkeepers in the Ghanta Ghar market are now happy with the ban. There is no official monitoring of pollution in Fazilka, but shopkeepers claim the air is cleaner. "I used to keep a jug of water for my staff and customers. Before the car ban, I had to change the water every hour as it would turn dirty," said Vicky Chabbra, owner of a local utensils shop. "Now, it remains in the jug for an entire day and still looks clear." Chabbra said sales in his shop have increased 25 per cent since the ban.

Roshan Lal, who sells *chaat* (North Indian street food) a few metres away from the utensils shop. "People have more time now. They come and enjoy their food without being hassled about whether their cars are blocking the road," Lal said. Vikram Ahuja, another local shopkeeper, wants the concept replicated in other parts of the town. "Fazilka is small; one can easily walk from one corner to the other," he said.

The carfree zone has spurred many an ambitious dream. There are talks of converting the Ghanta Ghar market into a pedestrian mall, with brightly coloured shops selling everything from cotton handkerchiefs to LCD televisions.

Rickshaw Resurgence

GWAF went further than simply introducing a cafree zone. Recognising peoples need to be on the move and get somewhere fast, a popular dial-a-rickshaw service was initiated. The rickshaws, called "Ecocabs", were introduced as a new form of public transportation using intelligent transport tools, arriving at residents doorsteps following a phone call. The city has been divided into five zones and each has a different phone number.

"We didn't want the rickshaws to be considered a poor man's transport, therefore the name Ecocabs," explains Navneet Asija, a Delhi graduate. Initially, the scheme got a lukewarm response, but picked up when residents understood the utility. It's not just residents, even the rickshaw-pullers have benefited from fixed rates, which means their earnings have gone up.

Profits Following a Car Ban

Mayor Sethi plans to free most of the city of cars eventually. Sethi sees the carfree zone as a way to promote non-motorised transport and to build connections between the wealthy parts of town and the poorer parts. "The aim to create a car free zone and also to promote non-motorised modes of transport within the city is to build bridges between the prosperous sections of society in the city and the less well-off," said Sethi. He opposes the construction of new overpasses within the city, which is a courageous position in Indian politics today.

Fazilka has seen a change not just in the improved quality of social life and road safety for its people, but also in improved law and order, local economy and environment from reduced air pollution.

The successful projects making the city centre carfree have been beneficial in many ways, not simply by decongesting the market. With the carfree zone and the Ecocab initiative, Fazilka is perhaps the only Indian town with such simple yet effective schemes. And it is clear that with public transportation alternatives such as these, along with the introduction of carfree spaces, communities benefit from feeling safer and healthier, when free from cars. Fazilka can proudly show a new way to the rest of the country. ■

This is an updated and edited version of *Fazilka: Come without your Car* by Arnab Pratim Dutta available at www.downtoearth.org

CARS and the Economy

Liberating ourselves from the Bondage of "Common Knowledge"

■ by Debra Efroymson

Liberating oneself from false belief may be one of the most powerful freedoms. It is also something which carfree cities advocates should be used to doing: escaping from the myth that cars are necessary for movement opens a whole new world of possibilities and makes many otherwise obscured truths evident.

Likewise with economics: when we move beyond the "truths" that are so self-evident as to require no explanation (meaning that many of them will fail to stand up to examination), we can discover breathtaking possibilities. Of course it involves making a little effort to learn some terms and see through the common arguments that are used to keep us in the dark, but if we ever want to achieve our carfree cities, there may be no other choice than to expand our knowledge and discard what "common sense" tells us.

"Today it is almost universally accepted that we must make cars to keep jobs, not to move people about," wrote philosopher Hannah Arendt back in 1975[1], writing about the change from "an early producer society into a consumer society that could keep going only by changing into a huge economy of waste..." and where progress means that "to stop going, to stop wasting, to stop consuming more and more, quicker and quicker, to say at any given moment enough is enough would spell immediate doom."[2]

This is the world that economist John Kenneth Galbraith refers to as a squirrel wheel: we must work hard to produce a vast quantity of goods. We then need advertising to convince us to buy them because otherwise the demand would not be enough to match the supply. Then we have to work equally hard to afford the goods that we didn't want in the first place.[3] Meanwhile, since many people still cannot afford them, but the goods must be purchased as well as produced to keep the economy moving, banks provide loans even to the credit unworthy... and if the system collapses, the government (meaning the people) step in to bail it out. A great system for those at the top of the major corporations and the banks, but it is less clear how it benefits the vast majority of the population.

Jobs

No question about it, building cars creates jobs. But as Hannah Arendt suggests, is there not something odd about building cars not for transport but for job creation?

The question, thus, is not how many jobs building, selling, and servicing cars creates, but whether less costly means (in terms of money, pollution, environmental destruction, and cost to human life) are available to increase employment. It is also interesting to note that the same people who urge the need to continue the manufacture of cars, to bail out the big auto manufacturers, are happy to see jobs eliminated from the workforce through increased mechanisation and automation.

Rather than look at how many people's livelihoods are dependent on the auto industry, as a stand-alone fact that means that we must continue producing cars at whatever cost, why not look at the cost of that production, given that the production occurs in large part not to provide transport, but rather jobs? How much in raw materials, water, and energy goes into car production; how much fuel will those cars likely consume when used; how many people will die or be injured in car crashes? Perhaps it is not such a fruitful bargain after all.

"... is there not something odd about building cars not for transport but for job creation?"

What are the alternatives? Other than weapons, tobacco, fast food and soft drinks, most of the economy is far less destructive than cars in terms of impact on environment, health and wellbeing. If people stopped buying cars, there would be an awful lot of money to invest in various other activities that could create jobs - and as a side benefit, create wealth rather than destruction and poverty. The idea of retooling car factories to produce bicycles and mass transit, for which the need would dramatically increase if we stopped driving so much, is only one simple solution to the problem. Fortunately economies tend to be dynamic and to adjust to new circumstances with little or no help: where was the outcry, for instance, when typewriters became virtually obsolete?

Private Wealth, Public Poverty

A not so lovely phenomenon of "modern" times is the incredible disparity between the wealth of some individuals and the poverty of public services. People keep their houses clean and regularly dispose of their trash; streets are filthy and trash collection services often inadequate. People have expensive entertainment systems in their homes; children attend ill-equipped schools. People drive cars often worth tens of thousands of dollars or more; others pay to travel in shabby buses that fail to maintain a regular schedule

Endless creativity goes into defining various details and "refinements" of cars to increase their sales and to convince those driving older vehicles that they must regularly upgrade; little or no such thought seems to go into maintaining and upgrading public transit services, not to mention the condition (and often absence) of sidewalks and bicycle lanes or paths or trails.

The reasons for the disparity are rather obvious, and well-described in Galbraith's masterpiece, *Economics and the Public Purpose*[4], in which he thoroughly debunks the myth that people communicate their needs and desires to companies through the marketplace, and that the business of companies is to satisfy those desires; that is, that the consumer is at the heart of the system. Only small companies face pressures under the marketplace; large corporations control their costs, prices, consumers, and even to a large degree the government. The corporation, not the individual consumer, is at the centre of the economic universe. What benefits General Motors benefits General Motors, not the nation.

As a result, there is an absurd over-abundance of unnecessary products that happen to be lucrative to large corporations, and Madison Avenue is kept busy finding creative ways to convince people to consume the unnecessary. Meanwhile, the goods and services that people desperately need and crave – things like quality affordable health

care, good schools, breathable air, walkable streets, and good public transit – are the source of political battles that usually lead to failure for the general public.

Learning to say "No"

Galbraith, while not a self-declared (at least to my knowledge) carfree cities advocate, posits an interesting question: what if, as in the case of building a new school, those wishing to buy a car had to demonstrate their need? What if the assumption was that the car purchase is unnecessary, and the burden of proof were on the consumer to prove otherwise? And what if the situation worked in the reverse for schools and for public transit: that is, it would be assumed that more and better is better unless proved otherwise.

It is a bit disingenuous to ask from whence the money would come for such expenses when tax systems currently contribute to ever-increasing inequality in incomes. When we remember that everyone suffers from public poverty – that the rich themselves must spend enormous sums to provide themselves with transport, security, better schools, good health care and so on – it seems even more absurd that the tax system not be amended and priorities rearranged so that basic and public needs would take precedence over private expenditures.

One needn't be a socialist, or even believe in the need for greater equality of incomes, to see that there is something wrong when individuals are expected to make enormous outlays for private vehicles because the government is not able to provide a decent transport system. The situation becomes even more absurd when we remember that we produce cars not for transport but for jobs.

What if, rather than bailing out the auto industry, the government were to create employment through expanding public services: better public transit, sidewalks, and bicycle routes; more and better parks and playgrounds and other public spaces; better schools and health care, and so on? Rather than simply working to earn a wage to buy all that is needed to survive, while the job itself destroys the future base of the economy by eating up natural resources and destroying the environment, one could work at a job that increases overall wealth.

What about those who still wish to drive? As Galbraith argues, "Automobile use in the central city...[and] random residential use of land are ... cases where the advantage to the particular consumer is outweighed by the adverse effect on the community as a whole. In the past the presumption has favoured individual convenience even in face of larger social cost... The rational legislative decision requires the exclusion from consumption of products, services and technology where the social cost and discomfort are deemed to outweigh the individual advantages."[5] In other words, where the desires of major corporations interfere with the public good, it is the responsibility of government to act in the public interest: in this case, to ban the use of cars in the central city.

Bangkok: One vendor equals half parking space **image © Debra Efroymson**

Could you use more Vacation?

As Galbraith (and Ivan Illich and the other authors) suggest and the European experience indicates, one could work a lot fewer hours, as well. (Ever wonder how the Europeans can afford their 36-hour work weeks and 6 weeks of annual vacation, not to mention generous maternal and paternal leave policies and an enviable range of social benefits? Sure, they own a lot of cars, but they drive an awful lot less than Americans and have infinitely better systems of public transport as well as conditions for walking and cycling. Hmm...almost enough to give one pause.) Rather than work hard to create products that nobody wants and that people must work hard to afford to buy, we could work a lot less to create a lot more useful wealth that we could share a lot more equally.

Given the evidence, it would seem likely that the only hope for future prosperity is in going carfree. The problem lies in learning how to talk back to the corporations and economists who would like to keep us in the dark about a few basic facts of economics, and in learning to see beyond our immediate crises. Overcoming our fear of economics and learning to talk back to those who would keep us down could prove liberating in the most intoxicating sense of all, by giving us the power to fulfil our dream of carfree cities.

Debra Efroymson, Regional Director, HealthBridge in Bangladesh

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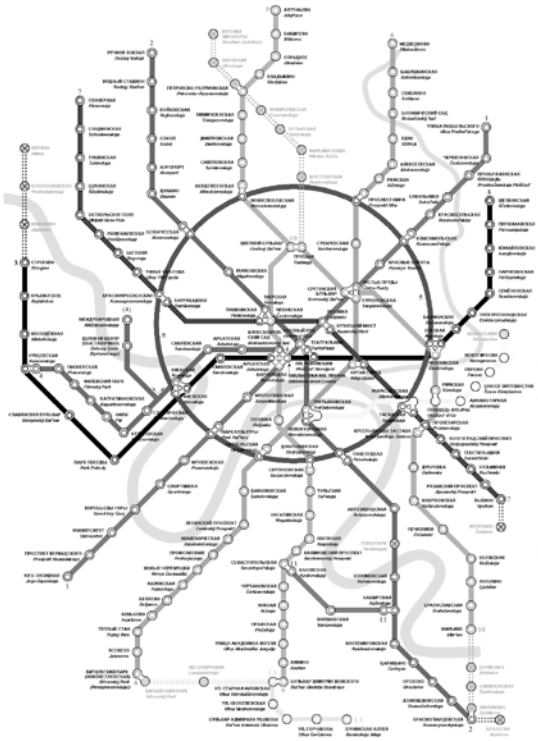
[1] Hannah Arendt, *Responsibility and Judgment*, Schocken Books

[2] Ibid. p. 262

[3] JK Galbraith, 1958, *The Affluent Society*, Penguin Books

[4] JK Galbraith, 1973· *Economics and the Public Purpose*· Houghton Mifflin Company Boston

[5] Galbraith, 1973, pp. 290-291



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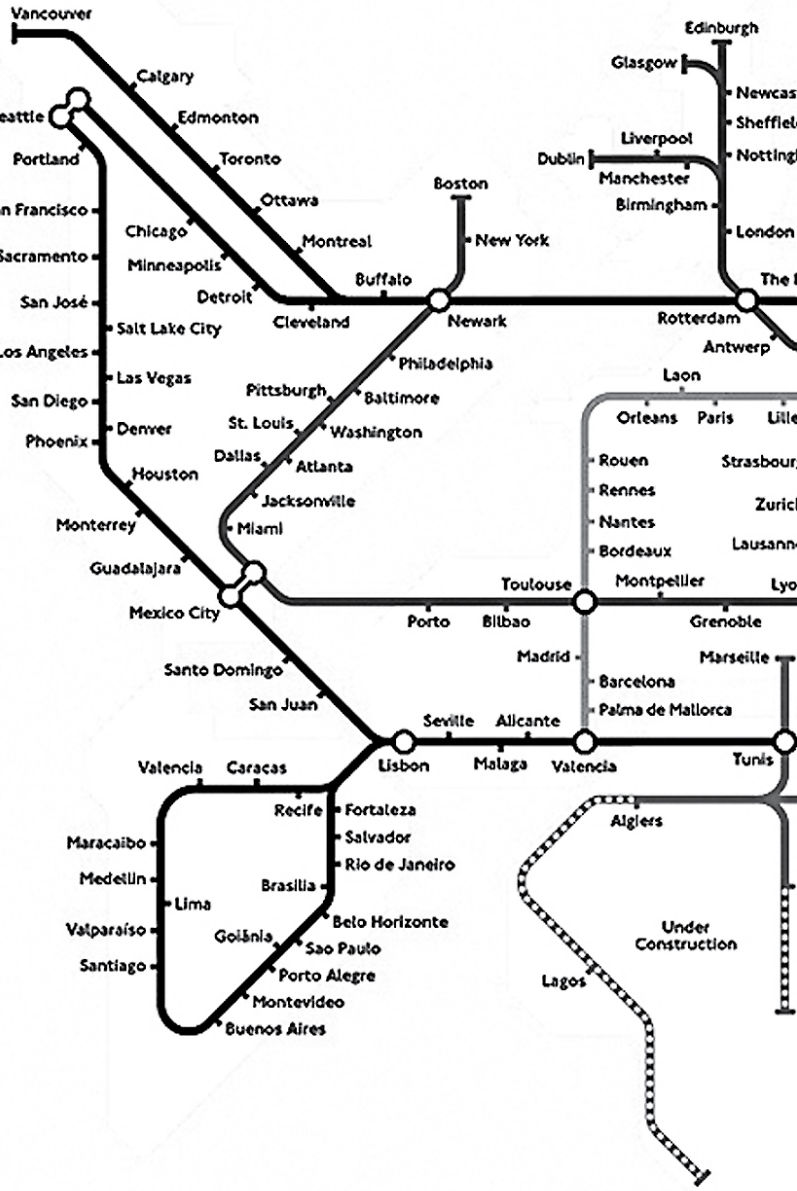

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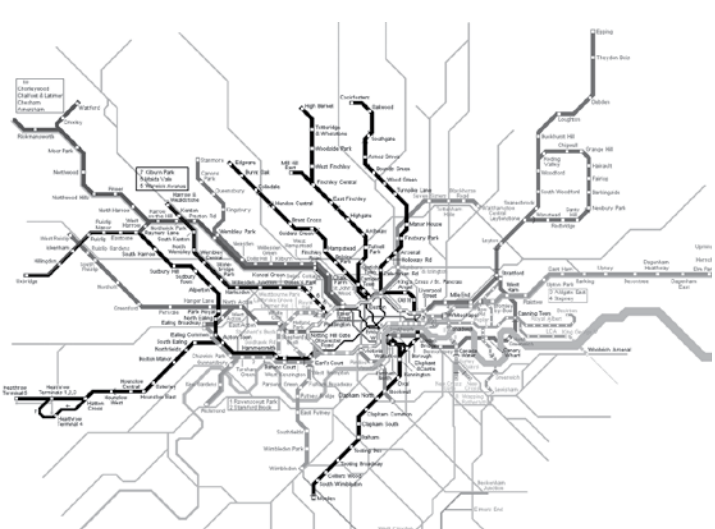

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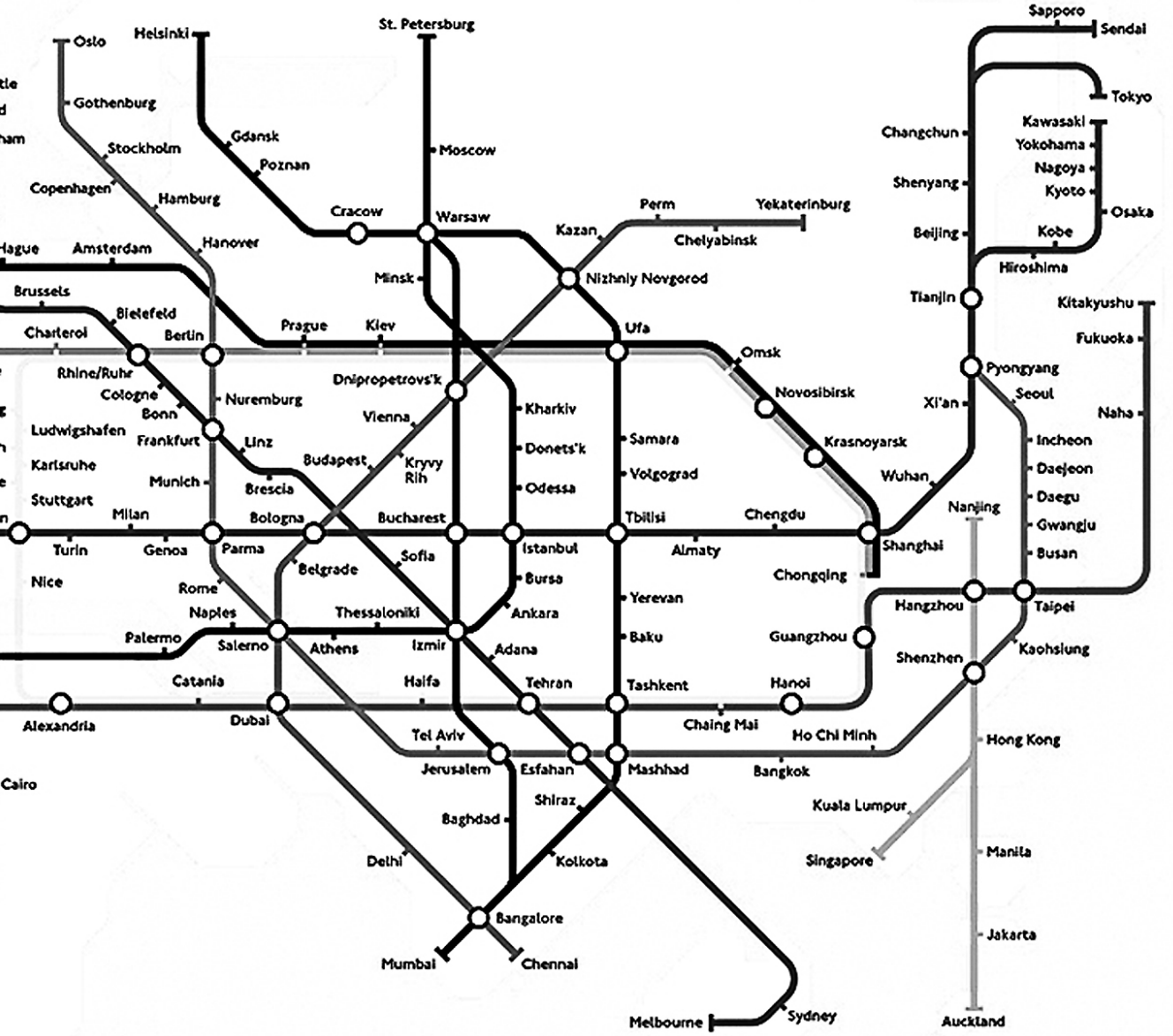

n rail systems

port – A Question of Finding or Losing our Way

ngs people from one place to another with a minor cost for the environment
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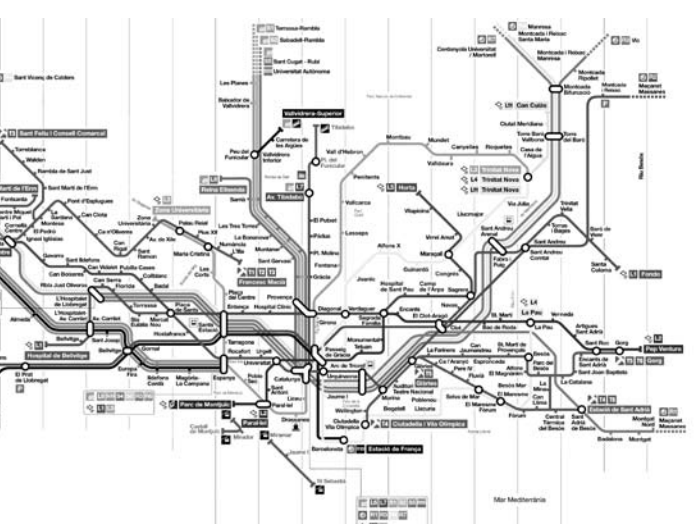

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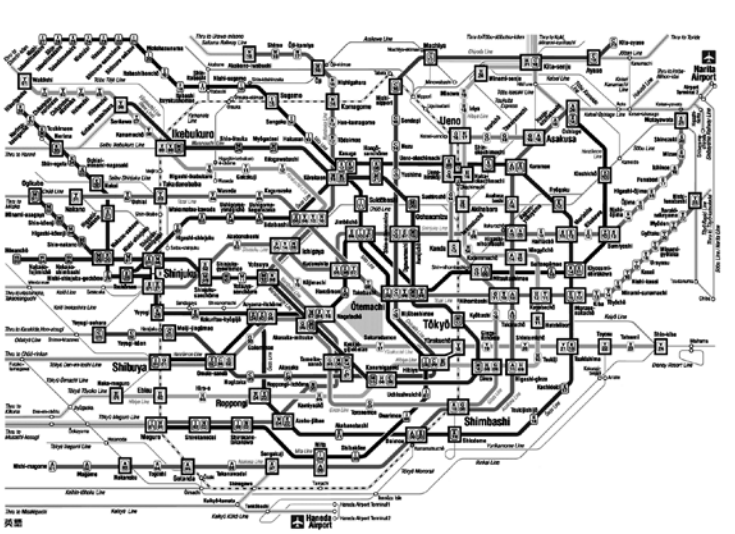


tokyo

■ by Hans-Liudger Dienel

Passenger Rights & the Rise of Public Transport

Public transport is essential to the quality of life of its passengers, both as a means to move around but also to achieve a sustainable environment. Hans-Liudger Dienel, Director of the Nexus Institute for Cooperation Management in Berlin, Germany, and co-editor of* Public Transport and its Users: The Passenger's Perspective in Planning and Customer Care *(2009), tackles the hugely important but often neglected concern over the rights of the passenger when using public transport. He proposes that an improvement in the design of services offered will lead to a substantial increase in usage, but this depends on transport practitioners and planners talking to travellers in order to understand their needs.

Do better passengers' rights and more passenger involvement in public transport policy strengthen customer satisfaction and lead to more passengers, and ultimately to growth and improvement in public transport? Or do enforceable passengers' rights weaken already loss-making transport companies?

A couple of Trans-European research projects on the effects of passenger rights and passenger involvement, conducted by the Nexus Institute for Cooperation Management in Berlin, give clear, documented answers to these questions central to the future and the potential of public transport: In almost all cases that passengers' rights have been codified and enforced, the number of passengers has increased, the image of public transport and of transport companies has improved; and despite additional expenses, the economic situation of the transport industry has improved as well. A discerning view shows that, particularly in long-distance transport, extensive reimbursement regulations have proved of value, while local transport still has little experience with major compensatory services.

illustrations by | Daria Samokhvalova

In recent years, the most important motor for strengthening passengers' rights in Europe has been the European Commission, thus strikingly demonstrating its citizen-orientation. The Commission closely observes individual improvements on the national level and uses them as arguments for the development of new supranational instruments.

Contrary to passenger rights, passenger participation in service design of public transport systems has increased much less in recent years. It's still much behind user participation for individual transport systems. There is, however, a connection between passengers' rights and passengers' participation. Both areas address a new valuation of the passenger: the identification of the passenger as a customer with enforceable rights instead of merely something that is transported, and the inclusion of passengers as collaborative counterparts and decision-makers in identifying weak points and developing proposals for the improvement of the public transport system.

Legal Liaisons and Socio-political Perspective

Besides the comparative transport political perspective, there is a socio-political and a judicial one. The latter particularly emphasises the necessity of enforcing passengers' rights as customers in relation to their contractual partner, the transport company. This perspective is important and fully justified, but not without its own dangers. "*Justitia non calculat*", jurisprudence does no accounting. This old legal motto could be radically applied to passengers' rights, which many transport companies fear will undermine their basic economic conditions. They refer to legal consumer protection in the US, which has endangered some commercial sectors due to indemnity claims that are sometimes exorbitant. This certainly has a tradition in the US. In the first decade of the 20th century, railways were so weakened by cartel bans and law suits that they almost had to completely give up their fight for passenger transport against competition of the streets. In Europe, the fears that a strengthening of passengers' rights could weaken the position of transport companies is, however, not empirically demonstrable.

From a socio-political perspective, it is overall desirable to strengthen civic involvement in public commodities. Public transport is a public commodity. Just as the judicial perspective places passengers' rights at the centre, the socio-political perspective emphasises passenger participation.

Passenger participation is about the development and adaptation of new, more customer-oriented transport systems and the development of solutions that often occur more easily to the customers than to the experts. Customers are experts, so to speak, in their own affairs – and this is not limited to the design of seats, etc. In the 1950s, it was often sufficient for the planning and development of new transport services if transport engineers and planners acted on even their own instincts. Today, technology developers and transport planners have to consult their customers, because post-industrial society has become more divergent, and because engineers and planners themselves often no longer reflect the mainstream of society.

Monopolies, Mismanagement and Metropolitan Moves

Why have public transport experts not discussed these issues for such a long time? And why are they now beginning to become more and more prominent? There are evident historical reasons for this. Firstly, the legal framework for railways and its specific form of customer-orientation developed in times when it actually had a monopoly as a transport system in many areas. As the rise of motorised individual transport put pressure on public transport, it survived in Europe thanks to public support and governmental protection. They were also able to advance by leaps and bounds through the decades-long fixing of fare rates and franchising in goods transport, which held road-based competition at bay. The limitation of enforceable passengers' rights was also among these factors. This was certainly a justifiable effort to protect an ailing public transport industry against customers' demands in order to ensure that it would survive at all.

Indeed, in the long-term this was politically disastrous for the transport companies, which slowly but permanently came to be seen as "shrinking", or on the retreat. Its employees, in contrast to earlier times, had a crestfallen self-awareness, additionally demoralised by increasingly obsolescent technology. These were times when some employees of local public transport systems did not anymore use the services themselves, and even looked at customers with a certain disdain. A growing proportion of the companies' revenues were no longer earned from passengers, but in the form of subsidies from public funds.

A widespread change has set in since the 1980s. Strengthened by new, ecological arguments for the construction of public transport systems, this change took the shape of investment in new technology, growth, and offensive customer-orientation. It began in long-distance transport with the targeted construction of inter-city transport and, in the 1980s, a new marketing approach and later the new high-speed routes. Large cities invested in new metropolitan transport systems. Until the end of the century, new trains and offerings in regional transport began to emerge. Transport companies and their employees today are not only significantly more customer-oriented than 20 years ago, they are also once more confident about the future and the growth prospects of their service, and therefore are more open to passengers' rights and passenger participation.

Direction and Developments

In what direction will and should the development of passengers' rights and passenger participation in Germany and Europe continue? In short: passenger's rights and passenger participation will continue to increase in importance for three reasons:

a) EU motor forward Passengers' Rights

Recent studies document how the EU has, for the last few years, been systematically and consistently advancing the development of passengers' rights. It has been strengthening its work on train, bus and ferry transport and, moreover, has supported cooperation with passenger and consumer organisations on the European level.

On the establishment level, to date we still have mostly only voluntary commitments by transport companies, who see an improved image, new solutions, and in particular more passengers. Indeed there is a recognisable trend: the movement is in the direction of strengthened cooperation with customers in the services of public transport.

b) Governance of Infrastructure

Passengers' rights and passenger participation exist in the context of a fundamental reconstruction of the infrastructures and service utilities available to the public. This reconstruction is moving away from services for which public governance alone has responsibility and control, and towards services that are designed and maintained together by the state, economic partners, and citizen engagement. In this context, the importance of passenger participation will continue to increase because people who take part want to be heard and to take part in decision-making as well.

c) Participation for a Better Public Transport

Competition is generally seen as an impetus for customer-orientation on the part of service providers; but this rarely occurs. The reforms of recent years have, however, sought to structure transport with an orientation toward competition. Though they only indirectly make competition for the "passenger as end customer" their goal, developments to date have shown positive effects on customer-orientation.

One precondition for customer-oriented service is that companies are aware of customers' expectations, and that they are given sufficient attention in the planning process. Today however, as the "purchaser" of public transport systems, transport authorities are the most important "customers" for many transport companies. They are carefully monitored, cared for, and served. Indeed if a transport company wants instead to draw more voluntary customers, it should strengthen passengers' rights and use passengers purposefully to improve their service. Thus, customer-orientation remains an important area for future development in local transport. We have a long way to go in this area; it is, however, a worthwhile process.

We end here: only when public transport systems can compete on the empathetic level with individual transport systems will they have the possibility of developing the market of voluntary passengers. Strengthening passengers' rights and passenger participation are two ideal approaches to achieving this goal. ■

Further Reading:

Martin Schiefelbusch, Hans-Liudger Dienel (eds.): *Public Tranport and its Users. The Passenger's Perspective in Planning and Customer Care,* Farnham: Ashgate 2009, 304 pp., figures, tables (ISBN 978-0-7546-7447-4).
This book examines strategies for the representation of user interests in public transport from a variety of perspectives.

■ by Daniel Bongardt

Prospects for COP15
Transport & Climate Change

The connection is inescapable: transport affects the environment and the changing climate can affect one's mode of transport. For instance, motorised transport releases polluting emissions and the roads made for them destroy urban and rural landscapes. Furthermore, motorised transport emissions which contribute to changing the climate, will eventually lead to people choosing or being forced to change to safer, cheaper, and cleaner alternatives. In December 2009 the United Nations Climate Conference (COP15) takes place in Copenhagen, Denmark. Daniel Bongardt, a transport policy advisor at the German Technical Cooperation, working on sustainable transport and climate change policies, explores these connections: transport and climate change, COP15 and the prospects for a carbon-free, carfree future.

Climate change is one of the major challenges being faced by mankind in the 21st century. The dramatic effects of climate change are already being felt and include widespread melting of glaciers and ice caps, rising sea levels, changes in rainfall patterns, heat-waves and extreme weather events. Climate experts warn that future effects will be even worse if no resolute action is taken now.

The global goal to limit the average surface temperature increase to 2°C compared to pre-industrial levels cannot be achieved without substantial contribution from the transport sector. Transport accounts for around one quarter of energy related carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions. Furthermore, a more than 50% increase in global transport CO2 emissions is expected in the period 2005 to 2030 (IEA, 2008).

The largest share of transport's CO2 emissions is still emitted from industrialised countries, but if no action is taken, transport in developing countries will be responsible for more than 80% of the growth. This is mainly due to an increase in road transport (IEA, 2008).

Yvo de Boer, Secretary General of the UNFCCC, stressed the importance of transport's climate change impact during the last Conference on Global Environment and Energy in Transport: "Given the role that transport plays in causing greenhouse gas emissions, any serious action on climate change will zoom in on the transport sector" (January 2009, Tokyo).

Co-benefits of low-carbon transport

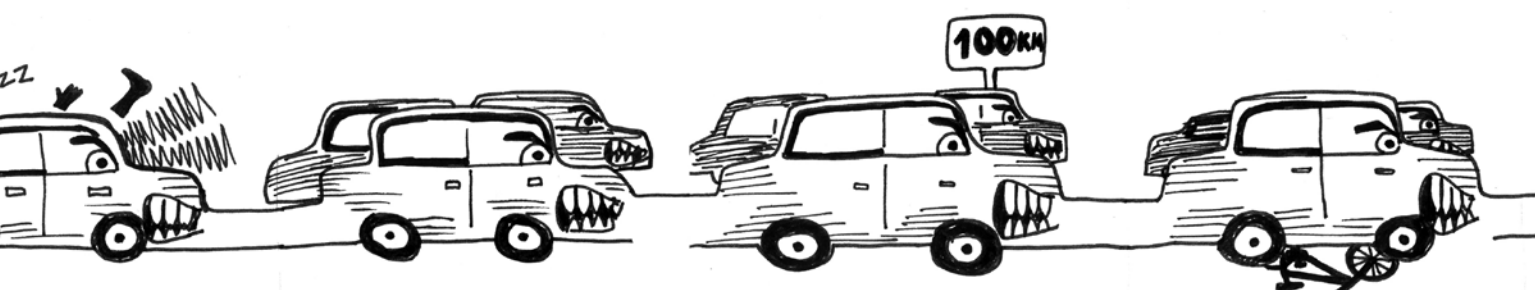
Climate change mitigation can have several co-benefits and alleviate other negative impacts of transportation. Especially strengthening energy efficient transport modes like public mass transit and non-motorised modes as an alternative to cars would lead to better affordability, less pollutants, a reduction of noise, better access and less land consumption. Considering these co-benefits, greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction measures in the transport sector have a high potential to contribute to sustainability targets and commitments, such as the millennium development goals. The traditional response to increasing traffic – construction of more roads – has shown not to achieve the desired outcome but has led to even more traffic and more pollution instead. These dynamics of the traffic spiral show the importance of an alternative approach, the idea of sustainable transport systems (Bongardt et al. 2009).

Strategies to reduce GHG emissions

Because of the numerous small emission sources, the transport sector is one of the most difficult sectors in which to reduce GHG emissions. The three key strategy responses to reduce emissions from transport are to avoid or reduce the distances travelled by motorised modes: the facilitation of a modal shift to more environmentally friendly transport alternatives; the improvement of energy efficiency of transport modes; and vehicle technology. Action in any of these areas should receive support from funding mechanism of future climate agreements (GTZ 2007).

GHG reduction strategies go far beyond just improvements in vehicle technology. For sure, technological improvements might be a part of the "solution" but they should be embedded in a wider framework for facilitating a low carbon transport future. Economic instruments, for instance, such as emission taxes, fees and road pricing as well as subsidies can be used to reduce the demand for travel, to discourage the use of motorised vehicles and to encourage the use of alternative modes in a long-term perspective. Despite the fact that experts agree on the efficiency of economic instruments to manage transport demand, they are rarely used in practice.

But further functional instruments to "drive" towards sustainability in the transport sector are available. Foremost, the integrated planning of land use and transport constitutes an approach to reduce the demand for travel and hence to meet the avoidance strategy. Regulatory instruments such as requirements, bans and rules can be used to restrict the use of certain motorised vehicles, to



illustrations by | Daria Samokhvalova

influence the type of vehicles used and the standards that they should comply with. Also creating public awareness by information is an instrument for promoting a sustainable transport system. For instance, greater public awareness of the available modes and their impact on the environment can lead to a mode shift to walking and cycling or to an improvement in people's driving behaviour.

Climate Finance for Transport?

Improvements in the transport sector might, even though not necessarily, require significant amounts of investment which is especially a barrier to implement sustainable transport strategies in developing countries. The Kyoto Protocol provides therefore funding mechanisms to foster climate change mitigation activities. One of the most well known mechanisms is the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM). The CDM allows industrialised countries with a GHG reduction commitment to invest in projects that reduce GHG emissions in developing countries as an alternative to more expensive emission reductions in their own countries.

A positive project example is the Bus Rapid Transit System "*TransMilenio*" in Bogotá, Columbia. In general, Mayor Dr. Enrique Peñalosa's transformation of Bogotá's transport system is an outstanding example for sustainable urban development. Under his leadership from 1998 to 2000 innovative transport strategies were used to allow all citizens access to mobility and simultaneously to reduce traffic congestion and air pollution. The present Bogotá is equipped with Latin America's largest network of bicycle ways, the world's longest pedestrian-only street and the planet's biggest Carfree Day. Dr. Peñalosa himself said: "In Bogotá, we chose to build a city for people, not for automobiles. Cities built for car mobility suffer from congestion and unsafe street conditions and leave many residents with poor access to jobs. Instead of these problems, we gave our citizens enjoyable public spaces and unprecedented mobility."

But experts claim that in principle the CDM has failed in the transport sector. Only two out of a total 1,792 approved CDM projects are assigned specifically to land transport. Problems for the CDM in the transport sector are the complexity of many transport activities and the calculation of the GHG mitigation potential of the projects (Wuppertal Institute, WP 179. 2009). Behavioural or legal changes can barely be captured in the rather stringent CDM procedures that have been developed for single project approaches. For the calculations reliable data is needed, which appears to be particularly difficult for transport project activities, which are characterised by a high number of small and mobile emission sources. Generally, it is noticeable that appropriate financial mechanisms to mobilise global efforts as well as high-level political attention are still lacking.

COP15 and Low Carbon Initiatives

In December 2009, the United Nations Climate Conference (COP15) takes place in Copenhagen, Denmark. This event creates the unique chance to ensure that transport is fully reflected in the new climate deal, the successor of the Kyoto Protocol. In this context there are a number of initiatives aiming at low-carbon transport.

"Given the role that transport plays in causing greenhouse gas emissions, any serious action on climate change will zoom in on the transport sector."

Since COP14 in Poznan, Poland in 2008, the "Bridging the Gap Initiative" by German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), UK's Transport Research Laboratory, Veolia Transport and International Association of Public Transport brings together a number of relevant activities of various partners working on transport and climate related issues. The initiative aims to facilitate the link between the transport sector and the climate change negotiations and promotes the following suggestions for a post 2012 climate agreement:

>Tap the high mitigation potential in the transport sector;

>Explicitly mention the transport sector in the negotiating text;

>Support the development of transport related mitigation actions;

>Provide funding for transport related activities, e.g. improving public transport;

>Recognise the important role of design of cities in efforts to adapt to climate change and tighten land-use and planning policies to stop unnecessary urban sprawl.

And there are more initiatives: in May 2009 in Bellagio, Italy, 21 representatives from 18 different organisations met to build a consensus on the required policy response to the growing CO2 emissions from transport in the developing world. The meeting resulted in the Bellagio Declaration on Transportation and Climate Change. This also led to the formation of a sustainable low carbon transport partnership under the lead of the Asian Development Bank and United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. So far, more than 30 organisations signed the partnership statement.

The International Union of Railways is organising a Train to Copenhagen communications campaign. During the symbolic one-month and nearly 9,000 kilometre long train journey from Kyoto to Copenhagen environmental experts and climate change campaigners will send eye-witness accounts of global warming signs underway. The Zero Carbon Caravan aims to carry the message of action on climate change to the UNFCCC talks in Copenhagen without using fossil fuel transportation.

Developing solutions for sustainable, low-carbon transport is an important step towards climate change mitigation. While industrialised countries finally have to cope with transport and change the trend of growing emissions, developing countries also have the option to make decisions on transport infrastructure investments that will allow them to attain some levels of sustainable development and prevent GHG emission in a long-term perspective. However, infrastructure decisions made today will lock cities into life style patterns for the next decades. For this reason, it is urgent take immediate action to tackle a route for reducing human made CO2 emissions from transport. ■

References:

>GTZ (2007): *A Sourcebook for Policy-makers in Developing Cities, Transport and Climate Change*: **www.sutp.org**

>IEA – International Energy Agency (2008): *World Energy Outlook* 2008. IEA: Paris: **www.worldenergyoutlook.org**

>Bongardt, D., Rudolph, F., Sterk, W. (2009): *Transport in Developing Countries and Climate Policy: Suggestions for a Copenhagen Agreement and Beyond Sources*, Wuppertal Institute: **www.wupperinst.org**

For more information, please visit:

>Bridging the Gap Initiative **www.sutp.org/bridgingthegap**

>Bellagio Declaration **www.sutp.org/bellagio-declaration**

>Sustainable Low Carbon Transport Partnership **www.sutp.org/lowcarbontransport-partnership**

>Train to Copenhagen **traintocopenhagen.org**

>Zero Carbon Caravan **zerocarboncaravan.net**

Travel doesn't have to Cost the Earth

"If you were to design the ultimate system, you would have mass transit be free and charge an enormous amount for cars." Michael Bloomberg, Mayor of New York.

We are standing at a crossroad: in order to reduce our oil dependency and make our cities climate smart, we have to change our ways of traveling. It is a fact that the future is on a track, and with free public transport everyone can come along for the ride.

Free public transport is a way to reward groups of people who travel in an environmental-friendly way and an economic incentive to choose a mean of transport that, from a social and environmental perspective, is obviously better than driving. The introduction of free public transport would mean more money for practically all commuters, and letting the car drivers chip in and pay for public transport would give them a good incentive to leave their cars at home. It is also a matter of gender equality: today men are over-represented among car drivers and investments in public transport are investments in women's mobility.

The decline in car-traffic and surge in the demand for public transportation that free public transport would render, would in turn stimulate a much needed capacity and comfort increase in the public transport system. This, combined with the fact that ticket collectors, controllers and guards could be retrained to be bus drivers, train drivers, station hosts and traffic hosts would make the public transport much more attractive than it is today. Also, free public transport would increase the purchasing power of everyone using it, which would support regional economies.

But free public transport shouldn't be seen as a stand-alone reform, but rather as one part of a bigger package of reforms to make our cities more green, liveable and fair. Free public transport should be combined with infrastructural changes to promote walking and biking, at least for shorter distances, as well as congestion fees and other measures to discourage car driving.

It is great to promote walking and biking as alternatives to driving, and of course these two means of transportation are the most ecological and healthy. But we must acknowledge that not everyone has the luxury of being able to bike or walk to work, school or their leisure activities. Kids, people with disabilities and elderly, people living in suburbs far away from their work and people living in cities where the weather just isn't suitable for being outside most of the year – for all of them biking or walking is hardly ever an option and this is something that needs to be addressed.

We also have to consider the fact that being able to walk or bike to work is, just like driving, often a question of class. It is seldom working class people who are living in, or close to, the city centre or their work. Free public transport is certainly a reform to promote green alternatives to car-traffic and encourage a modal shift from car to public transport. But one of the most important aspects concerns a better redistribution of wealth in the society. Even though almost everyone would, in one way or another, benefit from free public transport, the biggest winners are people with low incomes living in suburbs far away from the city centre.

"A win-win solution, if I ever saw one" Irwin Kellner, chief economist for MarketWatch (a part of the Wall Street Journal).

In September 2009 Planka.nu released their urban transport planning manifesto Travel doesn't have to cost the Earth, where they propose five concrete measures to make the transport sector in Stockholm, Sweden, climate-smart and socially fair. ■
www.planka.nu/rapporter

Belgium

In 1996, the Belgian city Hasselt introduced free public transport under the motto "The city guarantees the right of mobility for everyone". At the same time the mayor proposed to give absolute primacy on the city's Green Boulevard to public transport. Since then, bus ridership has increased by over 1,300%.

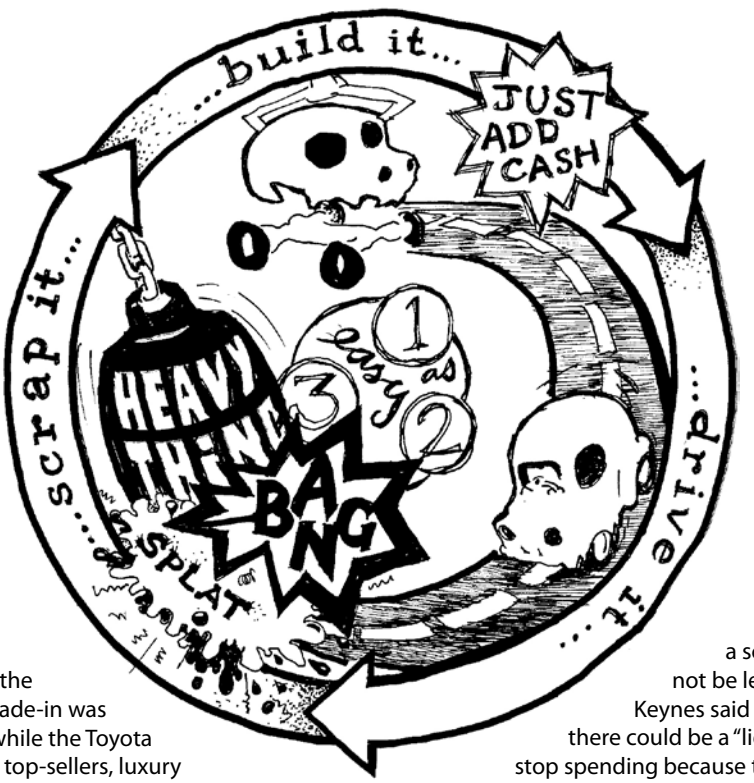
Sweden

Ockelbo in Sweden coordinated all their public and semi-public transport such as regular buses, school buses and mobility service into one system and made it free. Since then the ridership has increased by more than 260% and almost half of those were former car drivers. The municipality even saved money from the reform due to a decrease in administrative costs.

article and illustration by | Roger Bysouth

Time to Scrap the Scrappage Schemes?

This has been the year we all became familiar with the term "scrappage scheme". It refers to governments subsidies (sometimes backed by the auto industry) given to consumers for buying a new car and scrapping their old one. Although some countries introduced these kinds of schemes long before the economic downturn, they spread around the globe in response to the slump, with France leading the way in December 2008.



The schemes have generally been presented as pro-environment, often with names like the Austrian "*Okopramie*" (Eco Premium). There is at least some evidence to back up the green claims: In the US, for example, in the month the scheme ran, the top trade-in was the Ford Explorer 4Wheel Drive; while the Toyota Corolla and the hybrid Prius were top-sellers, luxury car sales plummeted. Compared with a year before, 18% fewer BMWs sold in the US in August, the month of most "cash for clunkers" transactions. In the same month, Ford sales were 17% higher than in August 2008. But not thanks to their gas guzzlers.

The issue of when it becomes environmentally beneficial to scrap a car is hotly contested. Professor Baback Yazdani, Dean of Nottingham Business School, UK, suggests that when an average car reaches four to six years old, its emissions make it greener to invest in a new car. Others argue it is never green to replace a roadworthy car with another car. Willem Buiter, Professor of European Political Economy at the London School of Economics and Political Science, and no environmentalist, wrote: "It's like being paid to burn down your house to encourage the residential construction industry". Professor Buiter and others make another point. If the schemes are short term, then people will probably buy sooner than they might otherwise. So after the scheme ends, sales will fall. This briefly delays bankruptcies and unemployment, but it does not effectively protect the car industry. If governments fund the schemes long term, then demand might stay artificially high – good for the car industry, but worse for the planet. And it would mean a new form of protectionism. Protecting national car industries has always been the primary aim of the scrappage schemes. Governments reason that the recession risks destroying car industries so that "when" prosperity returns there will not be the capacity to take advantage. Governments also get more tax revenue from a prosperous economy.

It's taken for granted that the car industry is an essential part of national economies. As the Managing Director of Nissan UK, Paul Willcox, said when the UK extended its scheme, it "has rightfully placed the car industry at the top of the economic agenda where it belongs". And President Sarkozy promised, "*La France ne laissera pas tomber son industrie automobile*" (France won't give up its car industry). As one country adopted a scheme, others felt they could not be left behind.

Keynes said in an economic downturn there could be a "liquidity trap". Consumers may stop spending because they fear recession. Demand falls; bankruptcy and unemployment rise. Demand falls further, so governments want us to spend our way out of recession.

Much of the opposition to scrappage schemes comes from the right. They argue the state should not take on more power and interfere in markets. This would at least be consistent with their approach to other industries in decline. A taxpayer does not have a choice about supporting the car industry and may never want to or be able to benefit from the scrappage scheme. These arguments are similar to what might be heard from many carbusters, who could find themselves with some very strange bedfellows in the coming months. Why should we all subsidise an industry which damages the planet? Would resources not be better used in unhooking us from dependence?

Some of the schemes point to how they could be applied in a truly green way. The Canadian scheme "Retire Your Ride" offers cash in exchange for an old car, or alternatives like a bicycle, public transport pass or membership of a car sharing scheme. Here perhaps is a model that can be developed, along with employers' incentives as in Belgium, Britain and Holland that encourage cycling. These schemes, coupled with a movement towards more sustainable production in the auto industry, and the kind of "green new deal" John Urry outlined in *Carbusters* #39, could be the key to help individuals and the economy kick their car habit. ■

by J. H. Crawford

Better Public Transport

In the first article* (Carbusters #38)*, we considered the basic principles of carfree conversion that were established in the Lyon Protocol. In* Carbusters *#39 we looked at the need for a phased conversion in existing cities. We also considered measures to reduce car traffic almost immediately.

In this article we look at the need for dramatically improved public transport as one of the cornerstones of nearly every carfree conversion. A few cities are so small as not to need internal public transport, and a few others already have such good public transport that few improvements are needed. However, nearly every city needs a greatly expanded route network, more frequent service, and faster operations. None of this is difficult to achieve.

The first change required is a change in attitudes. This must begin with the city government and include the public transport agency. In most places today, public transport is regarded as a second-class service for second-class citizens. This is why few people in the US use it: everyone but the poor is expected to have a car and use it routinely. In a few cities, such as New York, the middle class does use public transport and reasonably good service is offered. More positive attitudes prevail in most of Europe.

Public transport must become a first-class service. It must be safe at night, clean, operated by professionals, reliable, and on time. It should be free of all advertising.

It is accepted in most jurisdictions that people will have to stand during rush hour. It is thought too expensive to provide seats for all. With buses, any increase in seating capacity requires more buses and more drivers. However, rail systems can operate longer trains to provide more seats, without increasing the number of operators. Whatever is done, sardine-packed conditions should never arise.

One advantage of driving is ease with which you can take along practically anything you wish. We will not achieve this level of convenience with public transport, but we can get close by making it easy to take along shopping carts and baby buggies. (The system must be fully accessible to wheelchairs in any case.) This requires level loading (boarding platforms at the height of the vehicle floor), which also eliminates slow loading up and down stairs.

The best route network is usually a hub-and-spoke arrangement, with transfers occurring mostly in the downtown area, where service is concentrated and vehicles arrive frequently. The most common activities must be concentrated in the city centre or situated in every neighborhood, as with grocery stores and elementary schools.

"Service-quality considerations dictate the choice of rail systems over bus systems whenever possible. "

Efficient Route Network

Walking to a stop and waiting for a vehicle are usually the two largest components of a trip by public transport. We need to bring stops to within about 500m of every location in the city. This does not entirely solve the problem because the rider may not be going where the vehicle is, which necessitates a transfer. It is not practical to establish a route network in a large city that does not require an occasional transfer. However, we can hold transfers to a minimum and ensure that the actual transfer is quick and easy. This means short walks, no stairs, and short waits for the next vehicle.

Good public transport service is too costly unless the population is clustered around relatively few stops. There is otherwise not enough demand to justify frequent service. The necessary density was usual in most cities less than a century ago and can still be found in many cities. High density became unbearable in the US during the 1920s, when private cars usurped huge amounts of space for parking and movement. At the same time, cars imposed noise, pollution, and danger. That is why, after WW II, American cities rapidly dispersed into low-density, auto-centric suburbs, a pattern now common around the world. Good public transport is impossible in the suburbs: destinations are too spread out and density is too low for any reasonable system to work well.

Choice of Mode

Service-quality considerations dictate the choice of rail systems over bus systems whenever possible. It is clear that people perceive the difference. As I once said, half in jest, "Nobody with a choice ever took a bus anywhere."

If surface-running rail systems are chosen, they must be installed on their own rights-of-way, where they never compete with cars for road space. When Zurich, Switzerland, decided not to build an underground metro but to fix its trams instead, the first change was to move cars out of the places where they blocked trams.

The choice between trams and metros is argued endlessly. However, in cities with

populations over about one million, at least a few metro lines are almost essential, as only they can provide rapid service over the greater distances of a large city. Trams can provide supplementary, lower-demand service in big cities and can be the principal mode in smaller cities. The smaller trains are actually an advantage given the lower levels of demand.

Capital costs of new metros in cities are extremely high, whereas tram systems can be installed comparatively cheaply. However, when demand warrants the high capacity of a metro, it can still be cost-effective due to the comparatively low per-passenger operating costs. A further advantage of the metro is that it can reach very high speeds on its protected right-of-way. Trams can exceed 50 km/hr, but noise and safety problems mean that surface vehicles should travel no faster.

Very large cities need limited-stop regional rail service like the RER in Paris, which links the suburbs with a few major stops in central Paris. New York runs express trains that serve a similar function. Once again, it is a question of speed. Local trains making many stops achieve rather low average speeds, which makes long trips tedious.

High-Quality Service

If we are to ask people to abandon their cars, then public transport must be available at all hours of the night. Many larger European cities have buses that run at least once an hour during the night, and New York's subway never quits. Some level of night-time service is nearly essential.

Route planning is usually a tiresome chore for passengers. Finding a route to an unfamiliar destination can take a lot of time. The Dutch have an excellent nationwide system that will plan any trip you can make by public transport (which is nearly all of them). I found it reasonably easy to use and highly reliable. This kind of internet service is moderately expensive to establish but cheap to operate.

Likewise, information should be available at tram and metro stops regarding the time until the next vehicle arrives. This allows you to run an errand when you discover that you have a few minutes before the train arrives.

Faster Service

Public transport service must become much faster than it is today. Ideally, it should be faster to take transit than it is to drive, which makes it much easier to persuade people to give up their cars. A number of conditions must be met.

Transit managers need to speed journeys. Seconds count. This is not the current attitude at most systems, where service is considered acceptable if trips run less than five minutes late. But fast service can only be achieved if every aspect of operations is considered from a time perspective. For instance, it would be common in many systems to order new trains without fully considering how long it takes to close the doors and depart. "Only" five seconds might be saved here, but even on a journey of moderate length, that can save the passenger a minute.

Increases in top operating speed have a smaller effect on stop-to-stop time than might be supposed, but it is still important. Metro trains should routinely reach speeds of 100 km/hr, even though they may remain at that speed for a fraction of a minute. Most of the energy can be recovered through regenerative braking.

More important is the achievement of high acceleration, which has a pronounced effect on stop-to-stop times. Research in the 1930s showed that quite high acceleration is tolerable, even for standing passengers, if it is smooth. Some modern trams only achieve quite low accelerations, which significantly reduces average speeds.

Keep the vehicle moving. Station dwell times are a large part of total time. It should be possible to open doors on both sides of the train to allow faster boarding. If one side is used for disembarking passengers and the other for boarding, times are still further reduced, and there is less jostling.

Fewer stops make for much faster service. This point is rarely appreciated. Cutting out a stop saves the time that the vehicle is stopped and also the time lost to braking and acceleration. Buses are chronically affected by this problem – they'll stop almost anywhere. Good practice keeps the stops at least 400m apart, and 700m is better. Reducing the number of stops also makes the journey more comfortable. Each district must have only one, centralised stop for a given route.

Finally, fare-free transit is worth serious considering. We will not go into the details here, but it saves a lot of time, money, and aggravation for the passenger, which makes transit a more attractive option. ■

All images © J.H. Crawford

Bicycles on the Big Screen

Interview with Brendt Barbur

image © Bicycle Film Festival, Andy Mille

Brendt Barbur is the founder and the director of the Bike Film Festival (BFF), a celebration of the bicycle through music, art, and film, which is held in 39 cities worldwide every year. Nine years after the first festival in New York, he remains as enthusiastic and continues to promote the use of the bicycle in an artistic way, insisting that you have to have fun in order to get alternative ideas to catch on.

How and why did you start the first BFF?

I have no idea why! For sure one turning point was when I was hit by a bus in New York 10 years ago. I also got arrested at a Critical Mass ride around the same time, so I really wanted to do something positive for the bike culture.

I decided to use the medium of a film festival. Events centered around bike culture was not necessarily an original idea, as some people were already doing it for a long time, but the Bicycle Film Festival attracted many people from different backgrounds who were really enthusiastic by this idea. Mostly the artistic community of New York committed themselves to the project and we made our first festival in the city 9 years ago. It proved to be a success and it was obvious that people were really into it.

Did you expect such success nine years later? How did it spread to so many cities?

From the beginning I was quite ambitious about the event in New York, but I never imagined it would spread to 39 cities.

Now we have a team based in New York and we work from there like a web to other festivals, as a kind of franchise. We are like a big family, most of the teams have been working with the festival for a long time and are great friends of mine, others are new to me this year but our relationship is strong. I do the film programming for each city, so it's not that they use our name and we send movies over; it is a real collaboration between the homebase in New York and the various teams worldwide.

Do you get some help from cycling activist groups?

We try to work with bicycle organisations and support them. For instance the San Francisco Bike Coalition provides parking for bicycles and we give them a bunch of free tickets. Activists have their role to play, but we also try to get artists and other organisations involved in the festival – it's an urban-cultural event first.

How about the impact of BFF? What is your main aim?

Our main objective is of course to promote bikes for everyday life and hopefully we can inspire people to do so, but we also want to have a good time. Many people face obstacles allowing them to use their bicycles everyday and change will take time.

One of the biggest problems is infrastructure: I have to ride to work with a suit; is there a shower? Is there a place to park my bike? Is it safe to ride to work? For instance, in New York many people are frankly too afraid to ride to work, but there is mass transit there that takes people out of their cars. Another problem concerns lifestyles. In the western world in particular, we have many kinds of mass advertising telling us that to get from A to B you have to drive a car. Car culture is strongly implemented in our minds, and we've got to break out of that.

What is your take on the carfree movement?

On a personal level, I support the carfree movement. I'm really excited to see what's happening in New York: some major streets are being turned into public spaces. We would never have thought that Times Square would close to cars, and that we'd be able to sit down in the middle.

What are your hopes for the future of transportation?

The car has changed the way people live and is strongly connected with consumer society. It creates many problems like urban sprawl and affects social relations. Therefore, I really hope that bicycles can change the way people live, the way our cities are built, and the way people interact with their communities. I believe the bicycle can help to give more spontaneity in our social relations and to give a new face to our cities. ■

book review by Kelly Nelson

Pedaling Revolution

How Cyclists are Changing American Cities

Jeff Mapes

Oregon State University Press, 2009, 288 pp, ISBN 9780870714191

As I pedal to work every day – a middle-aged woman on a red girl's bike – I'm so busy watching for turning cars and shattered glass that I rarely pause to wonder if I am, at that moment, part of a cultural revolution. Jeff Mapes would say that I am.

His book documents current and past bike activity and advocacy in support of his claim that we're in the midst of a cultural shift toward bicycling becoming a mainstream form of transportation in the US. Biking, he contends, is increasingly being viewed as a sane, hip and even sexy way to get around town. Mapes, a political reporter who lives and bike-commutes in Oregon, has done his legwork, compiling loads of information. He includes interviews with key bike advocates and activists such as John Forester, the iconoclastic author of the 1970s classic *Effective Cycling*, tattooed Phil Sano, a fan of naked rides who has made several short "bike porn" movies, transportation planner Susan Zielinski who uses the term "new mobility" to talk about getting around without a private car, and Janette Sadik-Kahn, the transportation commissioner in New York City who has, among other initiatives, closed a section of Broadway to cars. Mapes also includes interesting historical tidbits such as Belva Ann Lockwood's presidential campaign claim (in the 1880s) that "a tricycle means independence for women."

"Biking is increasingly being viewed as a sane, hip and even sexy way to get around town"

The book focuses on urban cycling in places long associated with biking: Portland, New York and Davis, California, with nods toward San Francisco, Boulder and Madison. He also includes a chapter about the biking culture and infrastructure in Amsterdam. Mapes clearly likes biking and serves as a comfortable and able tour guide on his visits to these cities. I'd be more convinced, however, that a pedaling revolution is truly underway if he had detailed thriving bike cultures in Atlanta, Dallas and Las Vegas.

Still, kudos to Mapes for bundling all of this information in a readable package. Some of the information is basic (bike riding saves gas and burns calories) and some of it complicated (the varied plusses and problems of bike lanes versus bike paths versus bike boulevards versus cycle tracks) yet it's an interesting read. And, with a six-page bibliography and a six-page index, it's a great resource on bicycling and bike advocacy in the US. ■

BOOKS

ALICE IN UNDERLAND
Wolfgang Zuckermann, 1999, 88 pages
US$10, EUR 7, £6, or CZK 180
A curious mixture of nonsense, social satire and surrealist fairytale, takes the classical Alice through the dreary landscape of suburban America.

ASPHALT NATION
How the Automobile Took Over America and How We Can Take It Back
Jane Holtz Kay, 1998, 440 pages
US$29, EUR 20, £18, or CZK 520
Asphalt Nation is a powerful examination of how the car has ravaged America's cities and landscape over the past 100 years, together with a compelling strategy for reversing our dependency. Demonstrating that there are economic, political, personal and architectural solutions to the problem, Kay shows that radical change is possible.

CARFREE CITIES
J.H. Crawford, 2000, 324 pages
US$35, EUR 24, £20, or CZK 620
An unapologetic argument for carfree cities combined with a detailed and well thought-out plan, Carfree Cities outlines a city structure carefully designed to minimise environmental impact and maximise quality of life.

CARFREE DESIGN MANUAL
J.H. Crawford, 2008, 600 pages, hardcover
US$45, EUR 35, £27, or CZK 950
Carfree Design Manual starts from the urban planning principles established in *Carfree Cities* and shows how to design beautiful carfree districts that are places to build a satisfying and sustainable life.

CAR SICK
Lynn Sloman, 2006, 192 pages
US$29, EUR 20, £18, or CZK 520
"Cars cause environmental destruction, provoke stress and tear the heart out of communities. *Car Sick* provides a page-turning account of how we got into this mess, and more importantly, charts an attractive way out." - T. Juniper, Friends of the Earth

CUTTING YOUR CAR USE
Save Money, Be Healthy, Be Green!
Anna Semlyen, 2007, 96 pages
US$12, EUR 8, £7, or CZK 210
A personal traffic reduction guide available in UK or US version. Packed with easy-to-follow, best practice advice. For anyone who wants to cut their car use, or give it up completely.

DIVORCE YOUR CAR!
Ending the Love Affair With the Automobile
Katie Alvord, 2000, 320 pages
US$20, EUR 14, £12, or CZK 360
Divorce Your Car! speaks to individuals, encouraging readers to change their own driving behaviour without waiting for broader social change, stressing that individual action can drive social change.

END OF THE ROAD
Wolfgang Zuckermann, 1991, 300 pages
US$10, EUR 7, £6, or CZK 180
There are half a billion cars on the planet, and this book takes a long, hard look at the contrast between the image and the reality of this fact. Zuckermann offers 33 "ways out" of our car dependence, including pedestrianisation, alternative transport, restructuring public transport.

FAMILY MOUSE BEHIND THE WHEEL
Wolfgang Zuckermann, 1992, 30 pages, hardcover
US$10, EUR 7, £6, or CZK 180
Colourful illustrated book that teaches children the problems of car culture through the eyes of a family of mice who decide to buy a car, with all the consequences.

FOR LOVE OF THE AUTOMOBILE
Looking Back Into th History of our Desires
Wolfgang Sachs, 1992, 227 pages, hardcover
US$56, EUR 38, £34, or CZK 990
Examining the history of the automobile from the late 1880s to the present, Sachs shows how the car gave form to the dreams and desires embedded in modern society and in so doing reshaped our very notions of time and space, our individual and societal values, and our outlook onprogress and the future. In sum: an excellent and detailed cultural history of the car.

LIFE BETWEEN BUILDINGS
Jan Gehl, 2001, 202 pages
US$40, EUR 27, £24, or CZK 720
First published in 1971, this book is still the best source for understanding how people use urban public spaces. *Life Between Buildings* is the undisputed introduction to the interplay between design and social life.

NEW CITY SPACES
Jan Gehl and Lars Gemzoe, 2001, 263 pages
US$60, EUR 41, £36, or CZK 1,070 [hardcover]
Through colour photos, descriptive text and diagrams, this informative book highlights 39 public spaces around the world that have been won back from traffic.

PUBLIC SPACES - PUBLIC LIFE
Jan Gehl and Lars Gemzøe, 1996, 96 pages
US$49, EUR 33, £30, or CZK 870
Describes the remarkable improvements in Copenhagen, capital of Denmark, over the past 34 years, and how they were accomplished.

SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY GUIDE FOR MUNICIPALITIES
Justin Hyatt, 2006, 52 pages
US$10, EUR 7, £6, or CZK 180
The *Sustainable Mobility Guide For Municipalities* provides a full spectrum of themes related to transportation, urban design, mobility management and more. It is aimed at decision makers as well as NGO's working in the field of transport and urban planning, or anyone else interested in a broad survey of urban mobility issues.

THE AGE OF THE BICYCLE
Miriam Webster, 1998, 270 pages
US$15, EUR 10, £9, or CZK 270
"What if one afternoon all the cars in the world slowed down and then stopped in their tracks... soon tea shops burgeoned on the interstates... rush-hour traffic went by on bicycles at an average speed of eight miles an hour..."

THE LITTLE DRIVER [Special Offer!]
Martin Wagner, 2003, 56 pages
US$7, EUR 4.5, £4, or CZK 105
A children's book for young and old, *The Little Driver* takes a fresh look at our obsession with cars through the eyes of a boy still young enough to take nothing for granted.

CARTOONS

CARtoons
Andy Singer, 2001, 100 pages
Book: US$10, EUR 7, £6, or CZK 180
CD-ROM: US$5, EUR 3.50, £3, or CZK 90
Optional CD-ROM contains high-resolution TIF images of all graphics
A personal and provocative look at our relationship with the car, from Ford's first assembly lines to today's "drive-through" society. Features seven pithy chapter texts and a compilation of hard-hitting quotations, plus 90 of Singer's infamous graphics.

ROADKILL BILL [Special Offer!]
Ken Avidor, 2001, 108 pages
US$7, EUR 4.5, £4, or CZK 105
It's the comic strip that looks at cars, technology and philosophy from the viewpoint of a frequently squashed rodent. In *Roadkill Bill,* the wonderful, provocative, amusing and sometimes gruesome cartoons are collected together for the first and only time. Avidor gives voice to the suffering soul of humanity that feels bulldozed and paved over by industrial technology run amok.
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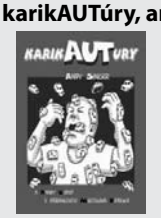

CARtoons has been published in Czech, Slovak, Hungarian and Polish. The books are part of amultilinguism project. To order, please contact: **orders@worldcarfree.net**

DVD

CARAVAN/PRAGUE
2007, 76 min., DVD, US$20, EUR 13, CZK 320
A bicycle caravan travels across Europe to shut down the annual meeting of the IMF and the World Bank. It will function without money, without leaders, and without permission from any authority. The police have other ideas…

SOURCE*

2005, 77 min., DVD, region-free PAL (plays on all PCs) - US$25, EUR 17, £15, or CZK 450
The tale of the Baku-Ceyhan-Tbilisi pipeline is a tale of corruption, greed and Western money flowing into the oil-soaked shores of the Caspian Sea. This documentary takes you to the source.

STILL WE RIDE!
In Tandem Productions, 2005, 37 min., DVD
US$20, EUR 14, £12, or CZK 360
This action-packed documentary is a glimpse into the shocking showdown between the monthly Critical Mass bike ride and New York City police in the months after the Republican National Convention in August 2004.

STICKERS

"ONE LESS CAR" BIKE STICKERS
Ten stickers: *US$4.5, EUR 3, £3, or CZK 70*
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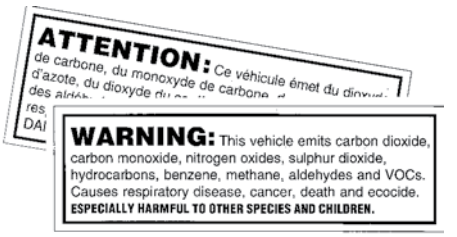
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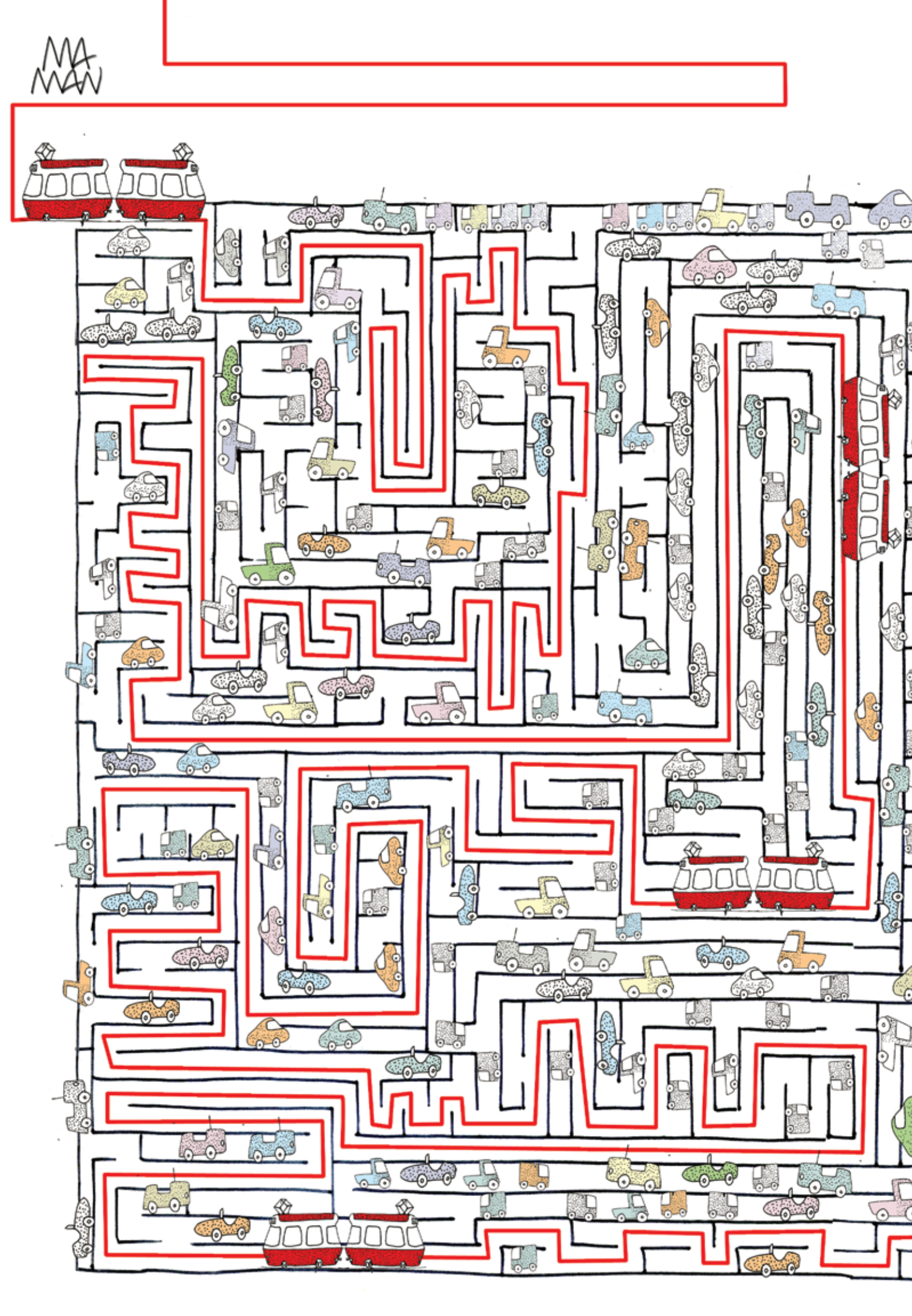

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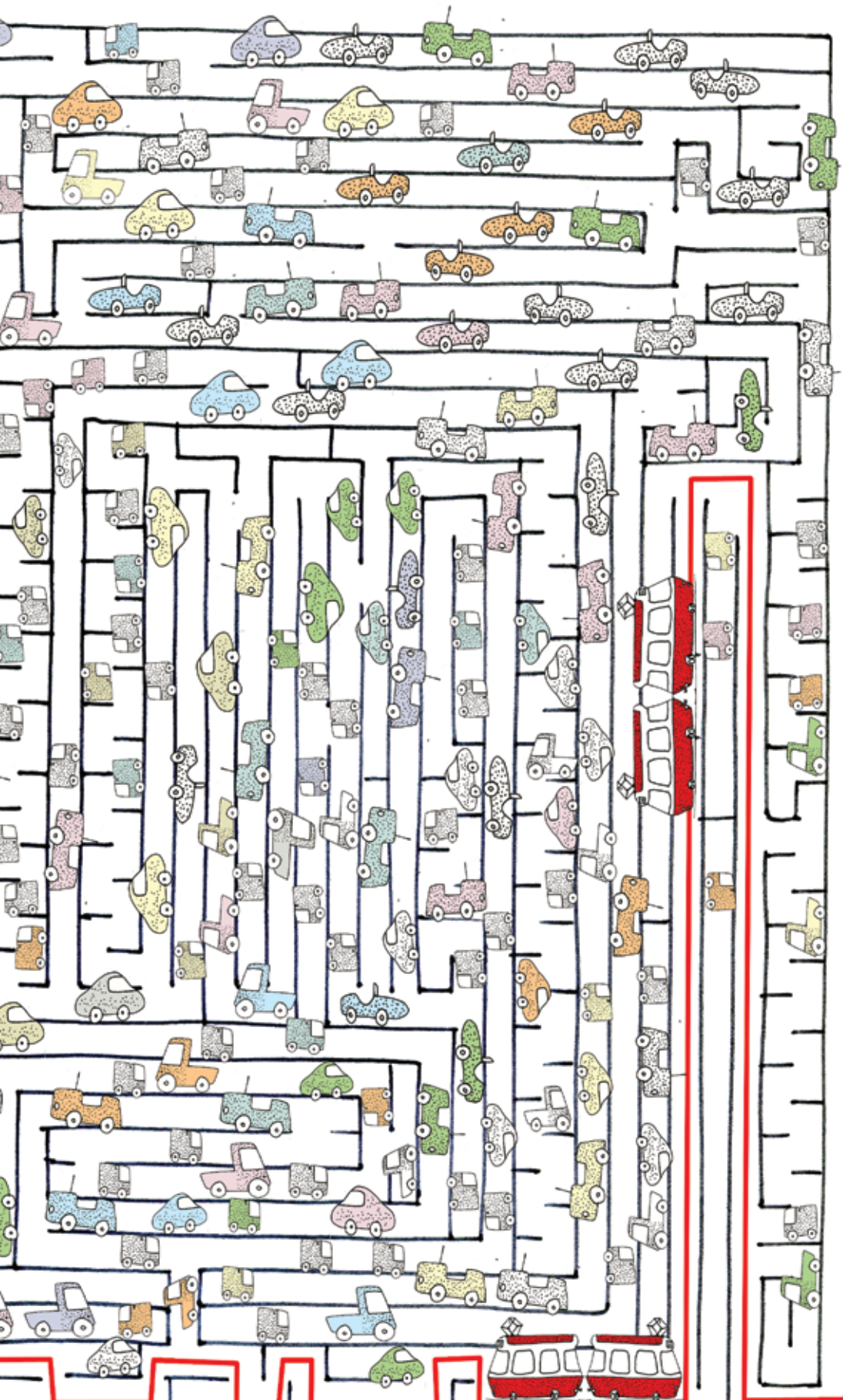

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